NISS
Parameters

A newsletter from the National Institute of Statistical Sciences

NISS Bestows 2013 Sacks Award and 2013 Distinguished Service Awards at JSM

Kenneth P. Burnham was selected as the 2013 Jerome Sacks Award for Cross-Disciplinary Research. The award was announced at the 2013 Joint Statistical Meetings in Montreal, Canada. The annual award, named in honor of Jerome (Jerry) Sacks, the founding director of NISS, was established in 2000 to recognize "sustained, high-quality cross-disciplinary research involving the statistical sciences."

The Awards Committee of the NISS Board of Trustees, which selected Burnham for the award, cited his "outstanding and influential contributions to statistical ecology with novel methods of inference, data analysis, and computation used throughout the world."
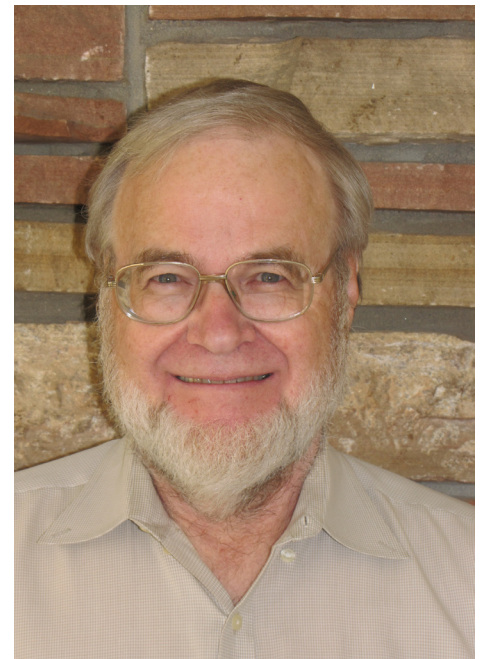
Burnham is an emeritus professor at Colorado State University and an independent consultant. Previously, he was a statistician and senior scientist at the United States Geological Survey (USGS), Biological Resources Discipline and the

Colorado Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Colorado State University. His area of interest includes design of studies for sampling biological populations, especially for estimation of population abundance and population dynamics parameters. He also specializes in statistical inference methods for ecological, wildlife, and fisheries studies, and data-based modeling of biological processes, including model selection and assessing model selection uncertainty.

He is a member of the American Statistical Association, the International Biometric Society, the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, The Wildlife Society, the Ecological Society of America and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute.

As Sacks award recipient, Burnham receives $1,000, and his name is added to a plaque at NISS that lists all recipients of the award.

Sally Morton and Thomas Gerig received the 2013 NISS Distinguished Service Awards,

Ken Burnham wins the 2013 Jerome Sacks Award for Cross-Disciplinary Research.

that were also given out during the reception at JSM.

Morton, Chair and Professor at Department of Biostatistics, University of Pittsburgh, was given the award for her long-term service to the Board of Trustees for NISS, serving on the Executive

NISS Sponsored Workshop on Geospatial Methods for Federal Surveys

NISS held a workshop September 16-17 at the Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center in Washington DC entitled "Geospatial Methods for Federal Surveys."

Geospatial methods are proven tools for studies involving agriculture, environment and natural resources, but have yet to establish a firm foothold in socio-economic studies and surveys conducted by Federal statistical agencies. The purposes of the workshop were to examine successful applications of geospatial methods in several domains, as well investigate if and how these methods might be applied in socio-economic settings. Presentations covered improving the precision of small area estimates, combining survey data in space and time, spatially enhanced survey sampling, and applications of GIS and Google Earth to survey design and data collection.

Montserrat Fuentes (NCSU) led a half-day discussion focused on moving beyond what was brought out at the workshop.

Speakers included Scott Holan, University of Missouri; Wendy Martinez, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Xingyou Zhang, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Seth Spielman and David Folch, University of Colorado; Anthony R. Olsen, Environmental Protection Agency; William Wheaton and Joseph McMichael, RTI International; Nathan Holt and Linda Young, University of Florida; Carol A. Gotway, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Montserrat Fuentes, North Carolina State University. Alan Karr and Larry Cox of NISS moderated the event.

The event was held for NISS affiliates. The Affiliates Committee of the NISS Board of Trustees is planning future workshops targeted specifically at Affiliate needs and interests.

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Sacks and Service Awards

Committee, the Nominating Committee and the National Presence Committee. She is currently serving on the Affiliates Committee and also on the SAMSI Governing Board.

Gerig, Emeritus Professor of Statistics at North Carolina State University, was recognized for his four years as Assistant Director for the NISS and SAMSI Affiliates Program. Gerig helped establish and grow this program. He was also recognized for being the Treasurer of NISS for several years.

Morton's and Gerig's names will be added to a plaque that is displayed in the lobby of the NISS building in Research Triangle Park, which lists the names of all recipients.

Sally Morton receives her shirt at the NISS and SAMSI reception at JSM after winning the distinguished service award.

Profile - Former Postdoc John Aston

Some of you may remember former NISS postdoc John Aston. He was a postdoc for NISS during 2002-04, and was based at Census Bureau headquarters in Suitland, MD. He recently attended the Neuroimaging Data Analysis Summer Program at SAMSI, where we had a chance to catch up with him.

John studied at Cambridge University for his undergraduate degree in mathematics, then spent half his time at Imperial College of London and half at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec while pursuing his Ph.D. in statistics. John's expertise was in statistical imaging.

After graduating, John wanted to do something very different. Someone told him about economic time series, which fascinated him, so he wanted to work for the U.S. Census Bureau, but as a non-U.S. national, he could not work for them. Then he heard about NISS and found out that NISS was working on a program for the Census Bureau, so he could be a postdoctoral fellow for NISS but work on time series research for the Bureau.

John really enjoyed working on time series. "It was a completely different environment than I had worked in the past. It gave me a very different perspective." Working through NISS gave John more flexibility to attend conferences and interact with other NISS researchers, as well as continue work on his imaging research.

Former NISS postdoc John Aston returned to SAMSI and NISS for a visit this summer.

A side benefit to working at NISS was that John met his wife, Karri, while he was based in the Washington DC area. They are now proud parents of two children, a girl age 5 and a boy age 2.

After his time ended with NISS, John took a job as assistant professor for Academia Sinica in Taiwan for four years. He focused mainly on imaging and time series analysis.

John and his wife moved back to England in 2008. He became professor of statistics at the University of Warwick. He has been working on imaging and conducting time series analysis for the UK Office for National Statistics, which is analogous to the Census Bureau. John really enjoys being able to work on such different applications from neuroimaging, to economics, to linguistics, really fulfilling the quote of his academic great-great-grandfather, "The best thing about being a statistician is that you get to play in everyone's backyard."

John is also very pleased that he will soon become a full professor at Cambridge and will be starting his new position in January. This is an exciting opportunity for him to move to a university with such historic traditions in Mathematics and Statistics, and also one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

John has been happy to stay active with NISS and SAMSI and has come back to the Research Triangle region a few times to participate in SAMSI programs. He was part of the Analysis of Object Data (AOD) program in 2010-11 in addition to attending the NDA summer program in June.

NISS News Bytes

Former NISS postdoc, **Piyushimita (Vonu) Thakuriah**, was appointed as the Halcrow Chair of Transport at the University of Glasgow. Thakuriah will help establish a coherent, interdisciplinary approach to transport research within the University, and will start two Masters courses at the end of 2013.

NISS Board of Trustees Chair, **Susan Ellenberg**, appears in Academy Award Nominee film, "How to Survive a Plague," which documents the early movement of ACT UP, an activist organization, that influenced government agencies and drug companies to develop new treatments and speed them to the market as the AIDS epidemic was spreading. Ellenberg was working at the time at the National Institutes of Health's NIAID and her work focused on AIDS. The documentary is available on DVD.

Stan Young was recently appointed to the Editorial Board of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. He started the position in November 2012 and will remain until May 2014.

Alan Karr participated in a panel discussion as part of a monthly webinar sponsored by the Society of Toxicology Risk Assessment Specialty Section. The discussion focused on whether journals should require the release of supporting data as a condition for publication. The webinar took place in February.

Karr presented at the 59th World Statistics Congress of the International Statistical Institute held in Hong Kong in August. Over 2,500 people attended the conference. Karr was a discussant for the "Statistics in finance and the service sector," and presented "Why data availability is such a hard problem."

NISS is helping the community by hosting the **North Carolina Science Fair Foundation's Board of Directors** meetings at NISS. NISS also sent a volunteer to participate in the **NC Food Bank's Sort-A-Rama** as part of the Research Triangle Park employers' day of service event on September 11.

New website created for the NCRN-CO grant.

NCRN.info Launched

The NSF-Census Research Network Coordination Office (NCRN-CO), led by NISS, Duke University and Cornell University, recently launched its new website: www.ncrn.info. The new website is connected to the eight research nodes that are involved with the NCRN program.

The NCRN website was developed by Design Hammer, a website company located in Durham, North Carolina. The site uses Drupal 2.0, an open source software package.

NCRN.info features news items from the eight nodes; links and references to research being conducted at the nodes; events; and links to the nodes' own websites.

NISS reached out to the community during the Research Triangle Park day of service event.

Photos from 2013 JSM

Meena Khare, Centers for Disease Control, and Saki Kinney, NISS.

L-R: Jim Landwehr, Avaya; Leland Wilkinson, University of Illinois at Chicago , Vijay Nair, University of Michigan and Jacque Landwehr.

Nell Sedransk, NISS, Leland Wilkinson, University of Illinois at Chicago and Susan Ellenberg, NISS Chair and University of Pennsylvania.

Naomi Altman, Pennsylvania State University; Carolyn Solomon and Dan Solomon, North Carolina State University.

Alan Karr , NISS and Susie Bayarri, University of Valencia.

NISS/SAMSI Affiliates

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AT&T Labs–Research, Florham Park, NJ
Avaya Labs, Basking Ridge, NJ
GlaxoSmithKline, Research Triangle Park, NC
    and Collegeville, PA
Merck Research Laboratories, Whitehouse
    Station, NJ
MetaMetrics, Inc., Durham, NC
PepsiCo – Biology Innovation Research Lab,
    New Haven, CT
Quintiles, Durham, NC
RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC
SAS Institute, Cary, NC
SPSS, an IBM Company, Chicago, IL
Yahoo! Research Laboratory,
    Silicon Valley, CA

Government Agencies & National Laboratories

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, DC
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National Center for Health Statistics,
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