

## THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE DEPT. OF STATISTICS

It was a good party! Thanks to all who attended and special thanks to those who participated in the Saturday program. We've posted a bunch of pictures from the June 29-30 bash on the website, and we've also posted all the "mug shots" we could find of former students in the department. We hope you'll all enjoy these, whether or not you were able to attend in June.

We got off to a flying start on the evening of June 29 with a reception at the home of alum Rich Carone, just outside Corvallis. Rich has a lovely home that's perfect for a gathering of this sort, and Lonnie Shepard's kilt set a high sartorial standard for the evening. It was a great opportunity to get together with old friends, meet new friends, and enjoy a good glass or three of wine. I guess we can hold ours better than the caterers can, because it was the caterers, not any of us, who backed into one of the posts along Rich's driveway on the way out (sorry about that, Rich!)

On Saturday we moved to LaSells Stewart Center on campus for a varied program of statistics and departmental history. Emeritus Professor Don Pierce led off with a description of the statistical work at the Radiation Effects Research Foundation in Hiroshima, studying radiation-related cancer among A-bomb survivors. Don worked there for 16 years and contributed greatly to these important studies.

Several presentations by departmental alumni followed on the general theme of environmental statistics, beginning with Steve Thompson's entertaining account of sampling elusive populations in various venues around the world, including Alaska, New Zealand, and places in between. In a panel discussion moderated by former faculty member Scott Urquhart, we learned about OSU's involvement with EPA-related research from Don Stevens and Tony Olsen, and about Ken Burnham's extensive work in capture-recapture studies. (One message I took home from Don's talk is that Scott Overton can be *very* persuasive.) Nancy Lo described her collaboration in NOAA's work on estimating the size of sardine populations on the Pacific coast. It was clear from these presentations that the training and research activities of the department have contributed substantially to the development of the field of environmental statistics.

Rich Carone recounted his involvement in a series of ventures in the production of very high precision tools for industrial use, which has required both advanced mathematical analysis and innovative computing. Rich's latest project is the Renaissance Tower condominiums downtown, an important component in Corvallis' revitalized riverfront area. (Now that Helen Berg has finished her service as mayor, Rich will soon continue the Stat Department's iron grip on power in Corvallis by serving as President of the Chamber of Commerce.)

At this point we deviated from the scheduled program to have a short discussion of the idea of certification of statisticians. Alum Ken McRae described the system of certification recently established by the Statistical Society of Canada, which he participated in starting. Tony Lachenbruch, ASA President-Elect and an adjunct faculty member in Statistics,

talked briefly about the ASA committee currently at work studying a similar program for ASA. A few opinions were voiced by audience members but unfortunately there wasn't time to extend the discussion.

Next, a panel of former students including Terri Utlaut (Intel), Danny Kugler (HP), Joe Larson (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center), and Siwei Jia ( Momentum Marketing Intelligence) talked about the use of statistical (and other) methods in their work, and how their study at OSU had prepared them (or not) for their tasks. A couple of the panelists mentioned the prevalence of very large data sets in their work, and the need for techniques to deal with them. The audience joined in for a lively and wide-ranging discussion.

The program at LaSells Stewart concluded with entertaining presentations from current faculty members Jeff Arthur and Dan Schafer, who have served 30 and 25 years, respectively, on the Statistics faculty. Dan dug out some old photos of current and former faculty (to the great amusement of their colleagues), and gave us a graphic show of the additions and deletions to the faculty over the decades. It was a challenging task at 5 pm, after a day-long program, to figure out who was missing in this year's picture from last year's, or which face was appearing for the first time.

We reconvened at 6 pm at the Tyee Winery, just south of Corvallis, for dinner and samples of Tyee's winemaking skills. Helen Berg, former director of the Survey Research Center and ex-mayor, served as Mistress of Ceremonies and introduced several special guests, including Shirley Calvin, Averil Seely, Genevieve Downing and former Dean of Science Fred Horne. Don Guthrie discussed some of the earlier history of the Department in a talk called "My Ten Years at OSU" (1963-1973). Slides from Don's presentation are posted on our website along with the photos mentioned above.

For those who couldn't join us, we hope that the pictures and this account will convey some of the spirit of the occasion. We can all be proud of the Department's first 50 years, and we hope that the Department will continue to flourish for many more years.

Bob Smythe, Department Chair