

SRDG NEWSLETTER

May 1983
Number 51

The Southern Regional Demographic Group, Inc. is a scientific and educational corporation operating under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is comprised of persons with professional interests in demography and population studies. The Newsletter is compiled and edited by Stanley K. Smith, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.

FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS FOR 1983 SRDG MEETING

The fourteenth annual meeting of the SRDG will be held October 19-21 in Chattanooga. The theme of this meeting will be "Federal Statistics: Believable? Accessible?". The meeting will include the presidential luncheon, poster sessions on demographic applications, roundtable luncheon/discussions and the usual full slate of panels and contributed paper sessions.

Members of the SRDG and other interested persons are invited to participate in this meeting. Papers dealing with any topic of demographic interest will be considered for inclusion in the program, although preference will be given to papers focusing on federal statistics. If you would like to submit a paper, please send two copies of a one-page abstract with the author's name, address and telephone number to Daniel Price, Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27412. Members are reminded of the SRDG policy limiting each participant to one formal presentation at the annual meeting. The deadline for receipt of abstracts is May 31, 1983.

SRDG BOARD MEETS IN PITTSBURGH

The Board of Directors of the SRDG met in Pittsburgh on April 16. Secretary-treasurer Bill Serow presented an unofficial (unaudited) interim financial report, showing the current level of SRDG assets to be \$5,690. This is a decline of \$967 since the end of the fiscal year, and was caused by a number of large bills from the 1982 annual meeting falling due during this period. The 1982 annual meeting itself yielded a net profit of \$765.

Serow also reported that tentative arrangements for the 1984 annual meeting have been made with the High Q Hotel (Quality Inn) on-

International Drive in Orlando, Florida. The meeting date will be October 17-19, 1984. The room rate will be \$44 for singles or doubles, and no charges will be assessed for meeting rooms. The Board voted to approve these arrangements and Serow was authorized to sign a contract. The Board expressed some interest in having the 1985 meeting in the western part of the SRDG region, perhaps in Texas. Parker Frisbie agreed to investigate possible meeting sites and report to the Board at its October meeting. Jeffrey Evans also agreed to investigate specific hotels for the 1986 meeting in Annapolis.

Abbott Ferriss provided a report from the Membership Services Committee. The Board endorsed the suggestion of this committee for a workshop on the use of microcomputers in demographic research, to be held immediately prior to the 1983 annual meeting in Chattanooga. The committee will be asked to prepare for such a workshop.

Julie Martin provided a report from the Committee on Applied Demography. This committee has instituted a data and software exchange, beginning in the present edition of the Newsletter; has planned several sessions on applied demography for the 1983 annual meeting; and has appointed a subcommittee to develop a directory of applied demographers willing and competent to undertake consulting work. Action is still pending on a session or roundtable discussion at the annual meeting on demographic consulting; a survey of applied demographers; and the use of poster sessions at the annual meeting.

In other action, Parker Frisbie agreed to lead the search for a new secretary-treasurer and Jeanne Biggar agreed to ask the Newsletter editor if he would be willing to serve an additional term or, failing that, to continue with the lay-out and printing of the Newsletter if a co-editor could be found to collect and edit the news items.

MICROCOMPUTER SESSION AT 1983 MEETING

A session on the use of microcomputers for demographic analysis is being planned for the 1983 SRDG meeting in Chattanooga. Plans are also being made to have microcomputer equipment available, perhaps in the style of a separate poster session. There will be an opportunity for people attending the meeting to observe and experiment with some of the software and data being used by demographers. The scope of these demonstrations has not yet been established. It will be determined in part by the willingness of SRDG members to bring material to the meeting and by the extent of the available equipment. Several possible demonstrations have been identified, but others are being sought. If you have suggestions, please contact Richard Engels, Assistant Chief, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, telephone (301) 763-7031. Be sure to indicate the nature of your data or programs and the specific equipment they require.

POSTER SESSIONS AT 1983 MEETING

For the second consecutive year, poster sessions are being solicited for the program at the SRDG annual meeting. A poster session consists of a visual presentation rather than a paper. It is usually scheduled concurrently with sessions consisting of oral presentations but for a two-session period of time. Typically the presenter prepares fairly large diagrams or drawings illustrating the substance of the presentation, and at least one session author is expected to be present during the scheduled period to discuss the material with interested colleagues. This format is particularly appropriate for any material best presented in the form of graphs, diagrams, specific methodological steps, and/or maps. It is also appropriate for computer programs. In short, any topic which is best understood by seeing rather than hearing the results will make a good poster session. Because special arrangements need to be made for these sessions, please make sure that the abstract you submit indicates clearly that you intend to make your presentation in this format. Poster sessions and presenters are listed in the program along with all the other sessions.

SRDG MEMBERS NOMINATED TO PAA POSITIONS

A number of SRDG members have been nominated for positions in the Population Association of America:

Board of Directors - Glenn Fuguitt, University of Wisconsin; William Serow, Florida State University.

First Vice-President - Peter Morrison, Rand Corporation.

Second Vice-President - Omer Galle, University of Texas.

Nominating Committee - Frank Mott, Ohio State University.

Publications Committee - James Sweet, University of Wisconsin; Robert Weller, Florida State University.

Congratulations to these members. The election will be held this summer.

CALL FOR PAPERS

A special issue of Sociological Methods and Research, edited by Gary Albrecht and David Jackson, will be published focusing on "Methodological Issues in Policy Research". Papers in this issue will deal with the process by which requisite knowledge is generated for the formulation and assessment of social policy. Papers may deal with research design, data collection, data analysis and the interpretation of findings. Contributors may take a retrospective view (extant laws, regulations, programs or social norms that affect quality of life) or a prospective view (forming a plan which sets priorities and allocates resources to achieve specific goals). All papers must be received prior to September 1, 1983. For further information please contact Gary Albrecht, University of Illinois/Chicago, School of Public Health, P. O. Box 6998, Chicago, IL 60680, telephone (312) 996-5765.

ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHERS MEET

A breakfast meeting of approximately 50 economic demographers was held April 15 in Pittsburgh at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways to promote and improve the field of economic demography. Topics of discussion included adding more sessions on economic demography at the annual meetings of the American Economic Association and the Population Association of America; holding workshops to study research topics in depth and share new research developments; and starting a journal focusing on economic demography. A steering committee was formed and a periodic newsletter will be circulated among interested persons. For more information please contact Ronald Lee, Graduate Group in Demography, 2234 Piedmont Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94720, telephone (415) 642-4535; or V. Jeffery Evans, 506 Andrew Hill Road, Arnold, MD 21012, telephone (301) 496-1174.

DATA AND SOFTWARE EXCHANGE

Beginning with the current issue, the Committee on Applied Demography will be sponsoring a section of the Newsletter devoted to promoting the exchange of data and software among SRDG members. This section has been put together by Mike Spar (data) and Dave Jackson (software). If you have any questions, comments or items you would like to have included in future issues, please contact Mike or Dave.

Data Exchange

Dick Engels at the Census Bureau has the following data available for floppy disks for Apple II:

- 1970 and 1980 total population for counties
- FIPS county codes
- County and state names
- 1981 and 1982 county population estimates (available this summer)
- State population estimates
- State-to-state annual migration flows, 1976-1982 (these files must be cleared for release by the IRS).

While one of the main purposes of the "Data Exchange" is to locate data suitable for use on microcomputers, there is also substantial interest in standard computer tapes for mainframes dealing with non-Census Bureau data such as vital statistics, industrial development, labor force and education. Any readers interested in participating in the "Data Exchange" are encouraged to send a list of your data files to Mike Spar, Tayloe Murphy Institute, 2015 Ivy Road, Charlottesville, VA 22903, telephone (904) 971-2661.

Software Exchange

The major purpose of this column is to provide a means for exchanging microcomputer software information of interest to demographers. While the primary objective will be to provide notices of the availability of non-commercial microcomputer software, a portion of this column will be used to pass on related information (references to software reviews, information on macrocomputer software, announcements of software conferences, and perhaps even comments on microcomputer hardware). We will neither evaluate nor recommend particular software products. A typical item for this column will be a statement of the availability of some product and an address for acquiring further information. Items for the exchange should be sent to Dave Jackson, Center for Epidemiological Studies, National Institute of Mental Health, Parklawn Building, Room 18-105, Rockville, MD 20857, telephone (301) 436-6254.

You may want to request a copy of The Micro and Macro of Sociological Computing: A Continuing Dialog from Charles Holzer, Department of Psychiatry, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06510. This paper grew out of a personal debate on the pros and cons of microcomputers and mainframe computers. It will be of particular interest to persons considering the purchase of a microcomputer in spite of the availability of a mainframe computer.

Statistical Software Newsletter is being published by the International Association for Statistical Computing (IASC). Articles are published in both German and English. There has been a recent change in publication policy to make English the primary language and to publish a microcomputer software section. The newsletter is available to members of IASC. You may join by sending a check for \$15.00 to International Statistical Institute, 428 Prinses Beatrixlaan, AZ Voorburg, The Netherlands.

Statistical Packages on Microcomputers, by Wayne Woodward and Alan Elliott, provides a summary of a survey of microcomputer statistical packages. Copies should be requested from Wayne Woodward, Department of Statistics, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275.

ACCESS: The Journal of Microcomputer Applications frequently publishes microcomputer codes (also available on disk) and software reviews of programs of interest to demographers. It is also a source for publishing microcomputer software and commentary on the scientific and professional use of microcomputers. The publisher pays a modest fee to contributors. You won't get rich publishing in ACCESS, but it is a useful means to share your work with others.

A number of population estimation and projection computer programs are being developed in APPLESOFT (BASIC Language for Apple Microcomputers) by the staff at the Census Bureau. The following programs are scheduled for completion in the near future: 1) Population estimates with the Ratio Correlation Method (April 1983); 2) Population estimates with Component Method II (April 1983); 3) Data entry, a support program for the previous two estimation programs; 4) Summary estimates, a generalized program to summarize and display population estimates and components of change (July 1983); 5) Plots of data and estimates (September 1983). More detailed information may be obtained from Richard Engels or Fred Cavanaugh, Bureau of the Census, Population Division, Washington, D.C. 20233.

COMMENTARY

Several years ago while studying demography at Georgetown University I attended a meeting of the World Population Society in Washington. At that meeting an internationally-known demographer, commenting on the location of the session for demographers, stated rather testily, "In this room are the people who make the whole meeting possible". The demographers were shunted away to a rather small room, an apparently ignored minority at a meeting where population experts applied the demographers' findings to policy-making. This was an early indication to me that political activity was alive and well in population circles, and that demographers didn't get much press coverage.

One of the much discussed political issues within our small group of demographers is the so-called struggle for leadership between applied and non-applied demographers. I think I can describe applied demographers. They are the ones that some people suspect don't really do demography, they just use somebody else's findings and take the credit. They're not making a scientific contribution. But, what about the non-applied demographer? Is there such a creature? Every demographer I know is producing some information that is used at some time. Additionally, every demographer I know is using information produced by someone else!

It could be that the issue isn't whether we're applying our findings or not. It could be that the issue is whether or not we did our graduate work in the "right" institution or that we found employment in an acceptable university or non-profit organization. And God

forbid you should sell your services for a decent wage in the private sector. There is also the issue of purity. It is often posited that work done by 'traditional' demographers is more pure. Everything is relative, nothing is proven. We who have labored in this world of demography know there are no pure data. There are no pure techniques. There is no unbiased answer. Should we then throw the baby out with the bath water, abandon the discipline and say there are no standards? No, what we must do is come together, talk among ourselves and reason things out (particularly at an SRDG meeting). We must examine with a trained eye the way information will be used. At some point we draw a line and say "this is acceptable" or "this is not acceptable".

We who labor in the private sector are fortunate to have the standard bearers in the traditional settings. How fortunate we are also to have the ability to understand "pure" research efforts and take the results to be applied where they will do some good. The more efficiently business demographers do their jobs the better for everyone. If a market is described accurately, it leads to lower prices for consumers. So let us come together this year in Chattanooga and put aside this divisive political strife which prevents us from getting the press coverage we deserve. We are the people who make the meetings possible.

A. Dianne Schmidley
C & P Telephone Company
Washington, D.C.
MAY 19 1988
FLA
U.S. POSTAGE
17

**SRDGS
NEWSLETTER**

Center for the Study of Population
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306

ANNE S. LEE
165 TIPPERARY ROAD
ATHENS, GA 30606