AAPOR News: December 2010

Happy holidays and welcome to your December issue of AAPOR News! Soon to be delivered every other month, AAPOR News offers timely, important association updates along with interesting news in the public opinion and survey research community.

This issue includes an end-of-year report from President Frank Newport, an AAPOR presidential reunion at the Mitofsky Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C., and information on how you can renew your AAPOR membership!

Letter from the President

As the year comes to a close, it’s a good time to update AAPOR members on the exciting and important activities of your association.

I’m happy to report that AAPOR is doing very well on a number of fronts. Our Membership and Chapter Relations Committee, headed by Kelly Foster and Joe Murphy, reports that AAPOR’s membership reached an all-time high of 2,400 members this year, over 100 more than at the same time in 2009. Record-setting membership, coupled with our all-time high attendance at the AAPOR annual conference in Chicago last May, suggests that our association is providing a needed, valuable and important function as it represents the nation’s public opinion research professionals.

AAPOR remains on solid footing financially. The Association is operating in the black in 2010, and expects to continue to do so next year. The 2011 budget has been developed over a period of months under the leadership of Secretary-Treasurer Barb O’Hare, and Associate Secretary-Treasurer Joe Lenski, with the expert guidance of Executive Director Susan Tibbitts and her team. The budget was approved by the Executive Council two weeks ago. Despite the difficult economic times, which have affected almost every element of our society, AAPOR’s financial situation is stable. Our association’s leadership continues to focus on its responsibility to be exemplary fiscal stewards of your membership dues and our other sources of income.

Along these same lines, the AAPOR endowment committee, headed by Dawn Nelson, is working hard to ensure AAPOR’s financial future by focusing on donations from members and supporters. You recently received an e-mail asking for a contribution. Please think carefully about directing some part of your yearly non-profit donations to AAPOR.

Conference Chair Rob Santos, Associate Chair Dan Merkle and the whole committee have been hard at work planning and preparing for the next Annual Conference on
May 12-15 at the Arizona Grand Resort in Phoenix. Several of us conducted a site visit to the Grand Resort this past summer. It appears to be an outstanding venue – complete not only with a golf course on premises, but with an amazing water park, lazy river and a multi-story water slide. The meeting facilities are everything we need to support an outstanding conference.

The Conference Committee reports a robust response to the call for abstracts, equaling last year's record numbers. The program is shaping up to be one that will provide very significant contributions to our profession. If you haven't already done so, please mark the dates now on your calendar. We look forward to seeing you there.

AAPOR’s Communication Committee, led by Jon Cohen and associate Rich Morin, is hard at work on a number of fronts, including intensive efforts to revamp the AAPOR.org website, and to zero-base a review of the way in which AAPOR members can communicate; i.e., AAPORnet 2.0. AAPOR’s Blue Book is now online, providing an interactive, search friendly and easily accessible guide to anyone looking for the very best in survey and public opinion research services. Please avail yourself of the opportunity to use these Blue Book listings. Companies pay for the listings, and the best way to ensure a continuing high level of interest in supporting the Blue Book is for you to use it.

AAPOR’s new strategic plan, as developed under the leadership of Councilor-at-Large Roger Tourangeau, has been officially approved. The plan represents a major forward thrust by your association. Work is already underway on several of the key initiatives outlined in the plan. One of these is a top to bottom review of the way in which AAPOR is organized, including the composition of the Executive Council. Former AAPOR President Mark Schulman and former AAPOR Conference Chair Patricia Moy are heading up a newly formed Governance Task Force that will engage in this review. Among the recommendations contained in the Strategic Plan is the need for systematic input from members and former-members on the current and future objectives and actions of the association. Naturally enough, this will involve a survey of both groups – scheduled for next fall.

The AAPOR 2010 Cell Phone Task Force Report, based on outstanding work by Chair Paul Lavrakas and an all-star committee of experts in this area is complete. This is a very important review of all available evidence and data on the impact, now and in the future, of cell phones on telephone based sampling frames. I am asked frequently how polling organizations are dealing with the situation in which a growing percentage of the population uses cell phones and has no active landline. I am happy to be able to report that AAPOR is fully cognizant of these changes, has been assessing them for a number of years, and has now completed its second in-depth, scientific investigation of the cell phone situation in today’s environment.

AAPOR has a new Task Force on Public Opinion and Leadership. This Task Force, headed by myself and Robert Shapiro, will be evaluating the broad context in which public opinion is, or is not, used by leaders in contemporary society as a significant input into policy. This review will include both philosophic and practical dimensions of the interplay between the views of the public and what is enacted in the public’s name by elected representatives.
Vice President Scott Keeter and Past President Peter Miller are continuing to develop the framework for AAPOR's Transparency Initiative. This is one of our most important short and long term objectives. Thanks to those AAPOR members - including the Standards Committee headed by Reg Baker and Tim Johnson - who are already working hard to bring it to fruition.

Our association is governed by an extremely hard-working group of volunteers who are elected to the Executive Council each year. Preparations for next year’s elections are now underway. This year the process of soliciting nominations for Council and developing the best possible slate of candidates to present to the members for election has been revised substantially. Under the direction of Past President Peter Miller and AAPOR Executive Director Susan Tibbitts, new procedures have been developed which will expand the universe of those who consider serving on the Executive Council, allow for a wider scope of soliciting nominations, and in general provide mechanisms for making sure that the best possible potential leaders are presented to members. The response has been robust, and I’m sure that we will end up with a superb slate of AAPORites who are committed to serving their association and profession.

I believe that our chosen field of work - public opinion research - has never been more important. AAPOR continues to be the flagship association dealing with the quality, integrity and use of public opinion research in this country. Thanks to all members for your continuing support, which has been and will continue to, make our organization so viable.

Frank Newport
2010-2011 President

**Membership & Chapter Relations Update - 2,400 Members and Growing!**

By Kelly Foster, Chair, and Joe Murphy, Associate Chair

Happy Holidays from AAPOR Membership and Chapter Relations (MCR)! This time of year is a particularly busy one for MCR. We are currently in the process of making sure that all of our AAPOR members renew membership in order to keep their fantastic benefits for another year. If you haven't already renewed your membership, please do so quickly. Membership expires at the stroke of midnight on December 31! Remember, in addition to POQ, AAPORnet, the events calendar and job bank, AAPOR members receive a substantial discount to attend the annual conference.

As of year-end, we have 2,399 active AAPOR members - the most in our 66 year history! Membership continues to grow, as does involvement in our regional chapters. The fall is a busy time for many of our regional chapters. The Southern Association for Public Opinion Research (SAPOR), Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research (MAPOR) and Pacific Association for Public Opinion Research (PAPOR) all held their regional conferences in the fourth quarter, and the New York and Washington, D.C. chapters have held workshops and discussions on nonresponse bias and the midterm elections. The regional chapters present opportunities for networking with colleagues in your area, so if you haven't looked
into your regional chapter, please do so. Information on the chapters can be found on the AAPOR website.

We are very excited about new MCR initiatives for 2011. We have updated our marketing and membership materials, and are excited to identify new areas for growth within our membership. We are working to reinvigorate the mentor program, evaluate and expand member benefits, better keep and harness our member data and work with the Transparency Initiative to make it easier for members to become a part of this important movement. And, in what will likely prove challenging, we are in the process of designing a member and former member survey which we plan to field in the coming year. These surveys will help us to understand how members and former members view AAPOR and what benefits we can offer to our members in the future.

The Membership and Chapter Relations committee is always looking to hear from you, so if you have any comments or suggestions on the values and benefits of AAPOR membership, feel free to contact Kelly Foster or Joe Murphy.

Special Thanks to the 2011 AAPOR Annual Conference Sponsors

Abt SRBI, Inc.
ADAPT, Inc.
Apperson
D3 Systems
Marketing Systems Group
The Nielsen Company
NORC at the University of Chicago
Oxford University Press
RAND Corporation
RTI International
Social Science Research Solution (SSRS)
Survey Sampling International
Valassis
Westat

If your organization hasn't signed up to sponsor the 2011 conference, there is still time! E-mail today or register on the AAPOR website.

Remembering Central City
By Tom W. Smith, with remembrances from Paul Sheatsley

The end of the year offers us the opportunity to reflect on important events in AAPOR's rich history.

With survey research set to take off as a business after World War II, Harry Field –
then at the University of Denver – implored industry leaders from around the world to gather at a conference in a Colorado ghost town.

Seventy-three pioneers answered the call to join together at Central City in 1946, the first AAPOR conference. They came from academia, government and political research, and the suspicions were mutual. Field’s argument had been compelling: if they failed to appear at the conference they would be missing out on something big, with their competitors gaining a critical upper hand.

Sheatsley documents much singing around the piano, poker playing until sunrise, mountain climbing alongside a very serious methodological discussion. A consensus around shared opportunities and common problems quickly formed.

Tragically, Field, who also founded the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), was killed in an airplane crash in France just two months after Central City. He was returning from a visit to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to try and advance international survey research.

Fortunately, of the original attendees, six are still with us. They now range in age from 84 to 92. Let me briefly mention them to you:

1. **George W. Pearson**, better known as Bill, was co-director of the Denver-based firm Research Enterprises. A member of the Army Air Corp, he was shot down over Europe and held as a POW. Later he went on to law school and left survey research for that profession.

2. **Nancy C. Cooley** was director of the Chicago Certified Interviewers Association. She later founded RAM Services and was editor of the RAM Report, a fashion industry magazine, and president of Fashion Insights International.

3. **Anne S. Zanes** was NORC field supervisor from 1941 to 1947 and later for many years a research associate at the Columbia University School of Public Health. Anne tells a story about how research was sometimes done in those early years: “Our secret Washington client wanted a telegraphic survey done that night. We wrote some tentative questions and as supper time approached, Harry suggested that we go down to Larimer Street for dinner….We took a typewriter and carbon paper and between courses we would dash out on the street to pretest the questions, revise them and go again before dessert.”

4. **Valerie Tamulonis** was a graduate student in public opinion at the University of Denver. She co-authored seminal articles in survey research with Donald Cahalan and Jack Elinson.

5. **Jack Elinson** was a research technician in the Troop Attitude Research Branch, Information and Education Division, War Department. Jack went on to a distinguished career at NORC and the Columbia School of Public Health and in 1993 received the AAPOR Award.

6. **Dick Baxter** was a graduate student in psychology at the University of Iowa. Dick was to complete his Ph.D. at Columbia and became a senior vice president at the Roper Organization. In 1970-71 he served as AAPOR’s president.

Of these six Central City attendees’ we were fortunate (and delighted!) to have Anne
Zanes and Dick Baxter join us in Chicago for the 65th AAPOR conference. They were pleased to meet with old friends and make new ones.

**AAPOR Presidents Reunite at Mitofsky Award Dinner**

It was a presidential reunion when 11 AAPOR presidents and the association’s president-elect found themselves among the 90 guests attending the recent Warren J. Mitofsky Award Dinner in Washington, D.C.

The gathering of past, present and future presidents was among the largest—if not the largest—assembly of AAPOR leaders in the same place at the same time for a non-AAPOR event. The group included current President Frank Newport and Vice President/President-Elect Scott Keeter. Also attending the Mitofsky Dinner were Past AAPOR Presidents Nancy Belden, Norman M. Bradburn, Diane Colasanto, Murray Edelman, Robert M. Groves, Andrew Kohut, Richard Kulka, Mark A. Schulman, Michael Traugott and Cliff Zukin.

The November event honored James A. Davis, Principle Investigator, emeritus, of the National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey and the winner of the 2010 Warren J. Mitofsky Award for Excellence in Public Opinion Research. The prize is presented annually by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut to recognize outstanding research or reporting that uses the Roper Center's public opinion data archives. The award is named for the late Warren Mitofsky, a past AAPOR president and longtime chair of the Roper Center Board of Directors.

In a tribute that followed the presentation of the award, Robert M. Groves, the current director of the U.S. Census Bureau and 1995-96 AAPOR president, recalled his experiences as a sociology student taking classes from Davis at Dartmouth...
College. Tom W. Smith, a former AAPOR council member who succeeded Davis as GSS Principal Investigator, also offered a tribute from his perspective as a colleague and collaborator.

The recent Mitofsky Dinner underscored the many connections between AAPOR and the Roper Center.

"Both AAPOR and the Roper Center are based on a dedication to furthering the value of survey and public opinion research," Newport said. "It is not surprising to me that leaders in the public opinion research field would be heavily involved in both organizations, as underscored by the attendance of so many AAPOR leaders at the Roper function."

Those ties extend to the leadership of both organizations. Former AAPOR president Colasanto is the chair of the Roper Board, whose members include current AAPOR president Newport, past presidents Schulman and Edelman, and current AAPOR Council member Richard Morin.

One reason why the annual Mitofsky Dinner traditionally draws so many prominent AAPOR members is "to support the Roper Center, recognizing the important role the center plays in protecting the legacy of public opinion research and ensuring that researchers have access to the broadest possible array of historical and contemporary research material," Colasanto said.

The annual fundraising event is "a great social occasion, with good music, good food, an open bar, and plenty of opportunity to socialize with friends...in short, a lot of fun!"

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**Your Gift to AAPOR**

As the new year approaches, AAPOR is poised to take advantage of a number of outstanding opportunities to fulfill our mission. With your help, we can continue to expand benefits to members and extend our efforts to improve public opinion research and its impact in society.

We would like to invite you to join with other AAPORites in making a tax deductible financial gift to help reach our goals, including:

- continuing sponsorship of educational programs
- raising the level of professionalism in our field by fulfilling the promise of the Transparency Initiative
- becoming an even larger voice in the public discussions of polls and surveys

AAPOR will continue to support new conference attendees through our Burns 'Bud' Roper Fellow awards, students through our Seymour Sudman Student Paper Competition and preservation of AAPOR history through the Heritage Interview Series Fund.
registration and journal revenues, as well as thousands of hours of volunteer time. But our challenges and opportunities extend far beyond what can be accomplished by relying solely on basic revenue streams.

Your support is essential to continue AAPOR’s crucial leadership position in the field of public opinion and survey research. We would like to ask you to consider including AAPOR on your gift list this year.

Make your unrestricted gift to the AAPOR General Fund online today or download the form and fax or mail it to us.

**Transparency Initiative Continues to Gain Support**

**By Scott Keeter, Vice President**

Earlier this year at the Annual Conference, then-President Peter Miller presented a vision for a new initiative to encourage survey organizations to be more transparent when reporting on the results of surveys. To make sure his message got through to the conference attendees, he even presented it twice! The initiative is intended to provide AAPOR recognition to organizations for routinely disclosing methodological information. In essence, it seeks to extend to participating organizations the disclosure obligations of the AAPOR Code of Professional Ethics and Practices.

Miller recommended that the Executive Council establish a steering committee to develop a plan for the Transparency Initiative (TI). As the newly-elected vice president, I was asked to chair this steering committee, which includes Miller and the chairs and associate chairs of the Standards (Reg Baker and Tim Johnson), Communications (Jon Cohen and Rich Morin) and Membership and Chapter Relations (Kelly Foster and Joe Murphy) committees.

This fall the Standards Committee has two subcommittees working to develop specific requirements for what should be disclosed by organizations that seek recognition under the TI, as well as how compliance will be assessed. These subcommittees include members of the Standards Committee as well as numerous volunteers from the AAPOR membership. The subcommittees are consulting with a small advisory group chosen from the more than 60 survey organizations that have signed on as supporters of the TI.

We plan to take a tentative framework to the Executive Council for review and input at its mid-January meeting in Washington, D.C. At that point, we'll invite comment from other participating TI organizations and the AAPOR membership, and hope to get final council approval in March. Once a framework for the TI is in place, the Communications and Membership and Chapter Relations Committee will be working to promote the TI within AAPOR and in the broader survey research community.

We plan to work actively with the survey organizations who signed on as supporters as we put the TI into practice. And a special session at the 2011 annual conference in Phoenix will be devoted to the TI.
Contact the TI steering committee via email with ideas and suggestions.

Communications Update - New Website in 2011!
By Jon Cohen, Chair, and Rich Morin, Associate Chair

The coming year is set to be an exciting one for AAPOR communications. Our projects include an overdue revamp of our website and choosing a replacement technology platform for our beloved AAPORnet listserv.

The goal for the website redesign is to have a cleaner, more functional presentation of our content. We want to make it easier for all members to get what they need and make the site more enticing to those interested in our association. Watch for developments on this front before the annual conference in May.

A “Future of AAPORnet” task force is in the process of reviewing potential successors to that listserv, which has done yeoman’s work over the past 15 years to keep us engaged and in touch. Under Shap Wolf’s direction, AAPORnet works extremely well, but the technology is nearing the end of its life-cycle, as is Arizona State’s benevolent sponsorship.

We also plan to showcase the 2010 Cell Phone Task Force Report in early 2011. Through a webinar and possibly other venues, Paul Lavrakas and his compatriots will instruct on this critical topic, showcasing AAPOR’s major report.

A big initiative for the nearly completed year was the migration of the Blue Book to online delivery. The final product is available on our website, allowing companies to advertise their services and display their logos. If your organization is not yet involved, please give us a look!

2010 Financial Update
By Barbara O'Hare, Secretary-Treasurer

AAPOR remains financially healthy, with operating revenues as of November 30, 2010 exceeding budget by $92,420. Our very successful Annual Conference netted $172,913, compared to $121,013 in 2009. Our operating investments are strong in spite of the down market, and totaled $728,068 as of November 30, 2010. We have established a good working relationship with the staff at our new association management company Sherwood, and we have benefited from their attention to detail.

The market value of the endowment investments as of the end of November 2010 was $201,503. During the year, the Endowment Committee has reviewed the history of the funds, and has clarified donor intent. For 2011, the committee is planning the next steps in fundraising in response to the strategic plan.

Our financial health and the updated strategic plan provide opportunities for AAPOR to enhance and expand its initiatives. The Executive Council is taking action on opportunities, and will continue to do so in 2011.
International Conference on Methods for Surveying and Enumerating Hard-to-Reach Populations

October 31–November 3, 2012
Marriott New Orleans at the Convention Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A.

The H2R 2012 Conference will bring together survey methodologists, sociologists, statisticians, demographers, ethnographers and other professionals from around the world to present new and innovative techniques for surveying hard-to-reach populations. Addressing both the statistical and survey design aspects of including hard-to-reach groups, researchers will report findings from censuses, surveys and other research related to the identification, definition, measurement and methodologies for surveying and enumerating undercounted populations.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

Identifying, Defining, and Measuring the Hard-to-Reach (H2R)
Defining H2R populations
Measuring undercounts for H2R groups
Improving measurement with administrative records
Sampling H2R populations

Techniques and Methodologies
Recruitment methods
Targeting the H2R
Use of social marketing and outreach campaigns
Overcoming language and literacy barriers
Use of community-based organizations
Dealing with complex living and housing situations
Tracking and tracing H2R populations

H2R Subpopulations
Racial minorities
Immigrant populations
Indigenous populations
Highly mobile and migrant populations
Homeless and refugee populations
Sexual minorities
Populations affected by natural disasters
Populations in zones of armed conflict
Stigmatized populations
Cross-cultural similarities and differences in H2R populations
Linguistic and cultural minorities

Calls for Submissions
February–March 2011: Invited Call for Submissions
April–May 2011: Contributed Call for Submissions

For information, visit the Amstat website or e-mail.