A Meeting Place

The History of
The American Association
for Public Opinion Research
Introduction

Memory Lane: Conference Highlights and Lowlights
Paul B. Sheatsley

with additional recollections by
Albert E. Gollin, Burns Roper and Warren J. Mitofsky

1946. Central City, Colo. The Beginning. A call from Harry H. Field, Director of National Opinion Research Center, then at University of Denver, to leaders of the profession here and abroad to attend conference the last three days of July in Colorado ghost town. World War II over. Survey research on verge of taking off. Academic, commercial, government, political researchers unacquainted, suspicious of each other. Some 75 individuals respond, fearful of implied threat by Field that failure to appear means missing out on something big, competitors gaining advantage. Historic Teller House in this old mining town, picturesque site of original “Face on the Barroom Floor.” But only one bathroom to a floor, and most people sleeping two to a bed in 30–40 rooms available. Much singing around piano, poker playing till sunrise, mountain climbing, along with very serious discussion of research issues. General agreement: all practitioners of survey research have common problems, common opportunities. Should continue meetings and should organize.


1948. Eagles Mere, Pa. First experience in the Poconos. Largely geriatric clientele at the resort; they don’t appreciate our singing, drinking, late hours. Our view: if the place had a bar, we wouldn’t have to drink in our rooms. POQ adopted as official journal. Budd Wilson elected President. Standards Committee introduces draft “Code of Professional Practices.” Much debate.

1949. Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. Aftermath of the 1948 election poll fiasco. AAPOR crisis. Some academics, market research-
ers anxious to dissociate from temporarily discredited political polls. Others call for united front. The weather arranged by Harry Truman: three days of 98 degrees. Single slate nominations rejected by meeting, and Nominations Committee ordered to go back and provide contest for every office. A really all-star conference. Program (Jack Riley, Chair) replete with all the big names of social, market, and political research.

1950. Lake Forest, Ill. Another campus meeting, at Lake Forest College. The first AAPOR “Presidential Session,” with Paul Lazarsfeld speaking on “The Obligations of the 1950 Pollster to the 1984 Historian.” Elmo Roper’s spoof of research gimmicks with his deadpan demonstration of the Roper Veracitator, an electronic truth machine which instantly analyzes, with flashing lights, the validity of the respondent’s answer.


1953. Pocono Manor, Pa. A social disaster. They didn’t like us (especially our minority group members); we didn’t like them (no booze except at state store four miles down winding road). But excellent weather and good program. Meetings on campuses had been held in June, after schools closed; conventions now held in April or May when weather cooler. Julian L. Woodward Award established, in honor of late President, “for distinguished contributions to one or more branches of public opinion research.” Pennsylvania Dutch wurst available to all in Gus Wiebe’s room.

1954. Asbury Park, N.J. The ancient Berkeley-Carteret Hotel. And lots of rain on boardwalk. Helen Wiebe and Hope Klapper dragging their find of the year through lobby—a whale vertebra. AAPOR’s first recognition of “motivation research” with round table on subject.
Stouffer’s presidential address on interdependence of science and practice, and role of AAPOR as a bridge between the two.

1955. Madison, Wis., Hotel Loraine. Tenth annual conference, and one of the most memorable (Bob Bower, Chair). Two sessions on motivation research (MR) but only one remembered today: Elmo Roper, faced with problem of selling breakfast cereal and researching it through MR. Donning white coat, he orders his sample of one wheeled in (young lady reclining on couch). Through skillful psychiatric interviewing (“What do you like for breakfast?” “A roll in bed with honey.” “If you were an egg, would you rather be fried or scrambled?” “I’d rather be cuddled.”), he develops proper marketing strategy, (Cereal Institute should create a square egg that would stack in refrigerator and would not roll off the kitchen counter). Presentation of first Woodward Award to Paul Lazarsfeld, and Paul’s affecting acceptance speech. The Stouffer session on civil liberties study, with Riesman, Sheatsley, Hyman. Project Directors Meet the Critic, with Berelson and Campbell defending respective voting studies against Shirley Star. “Public Opinion Research and the Cold War,” with Ray Bauer, Ralph White, Phill Davison. Gallup’s Presidential address. Deep concern in business meeting about impact of government security investigations on public opinion research and on AAPOR members.

1956. Buck Hill Falls, Pa., The Inn. One more try at the Poconos, and the last to date. Liquor now available at separate casino downhill from main inn. (After drinking, you have to walk uphill.) But elderly Pocono clientele still unaccepting of AAPOR presence. On complaint of one of these, two police enter AAPOR room at 2:30 a.m. and break up earnest sampling discussion. Another complaint of “nude couple running down hall” (early streaking?). When management identified them as AAPOR, Joe Klapper asks, “Where were they wearing their badges?” AAPOR then barred by Pocono Hotels trade group as undesirable. However, what some regard as single best AAPOR session ever, chaired by Gus Wiebe: four independent analyses of 20 qualitative interviews, using approaches of Freudian psychology, motivation research, sociology, and statistical analysis. And spontaneous outpouring of affection and approval, as second Woodward Award presented to Herb Hyman.

1957. Washington, D.C., Shoreham Hotel. First meeting in big-city context. Shared this huge hotel with meeting of large lumber trade association. (AAPOR a splinter group?) Some of us wound up at their parties; not bad. Last year’s successful Wiebe session repeated with Helen Dinerman presiding over four independent analyses of quanti-


1959. Lake George, N.Y. Sagamore. Another memorable conference (Paul Sheatsley, Chair, Ms. Mike McGarry at registration desk). Joe Klapper finally finds AAPOR a home at Hotel Sagamore. Beautiful setting, exclusive occupancy, cocktail party on house, abundant food (including midnight wienie roasts and “Chinese Smorgasbord”), ice carvings on display at Saturday buffet lunch, three-piece dance band playing until 1 a.m., then Charlie Raymond taking over piano and Herb Krugman the drums; playing cards cheerfully supplied for poker and bridge players; no restrictions on booze; kitchen help lined up to welcome us in to banquet applauding in time with music; and finally, parade of whole Sagamore staff at conclusion of dinner, to enthusiastic strains of “Anchors Aweigh,” with maitre’d carrying large American flag and dining room lights flashing, as we wildly applaud them. However, a few drawbacks: AAPOR the first guest of hotel’s new season, and youthful summer staff of waiters and bellmen inexperienced and subject to large error. Charles Sipe, invited guest, shaken by screams of young AAPORettes when he entered bath they unwittingly shared. Also, temperatures in low 40s and heating system not working too well. In auditorium where Friday evening session held, guest speaker Hilde Himmelweit from England tells us about her research on TV effects on children between chattering teeth while bundled up in fur coat. Program highlights an anticlimax after all this. But many still remember Elmo Roper’s eloquent acceptance speech when presented with Woodward Award. And Dave Wallace’s presidential address, “A Tribute to the Second Sigma.”

1960. Atlantic City, N.J., Hotel Traymore. Back to reality. Interesting session on presidential election studies, with Stouffer presiding over panel of Samuel Lubell, Elmo Roper, and Lou Harris. This was the
year Harris worked for John Kennedy’s presidential campaign. It also was a first reunion of sorts between Roper and Harris following Lou’s split from the Roper Organization in 1956 to form his own company. Splendid party hosted by Les Frankel with son Marty serving drinks. Presentation of Woodward Award by President Hyman to Clyde Hart. Two really nice guys. Boardwalk auctioneers a popular side show.

1961. Berkeley, Calif., Claremont Hotel. First conference west of the Mississippi (not counting Central City). Usual problem of sharing hotel, this time with local John Birch Society meeting (Angus Campbell, other AAPORians infiltrate it for research purposes) and also with American Simian Society. This latter disconcerting: people wandering around lobby introducing their pet monkeys (usually attired in colorful costumes). Hal Mendelsohn vows never to drink again after being greeted in hotel elevator by monkey in sailor suit. Merv Field party at Roaring Twenties Club, with girl on swing and Dick Baxter making futile passes at her. The legendary Kid Ory’s Dixieland trombone in some dive near Fisherman’s Wharf. Memories of program, though ably put together by Don Cahalan, naturally pale in comparison, except for Bob Carlson’s presidential address, “High Noon in the Research Marketplace.”

1962. Lake George, N.Y., Sagamore. First time AAPOR returns to any previous conference site. Big welcome from Sagamore staff and many reminiscences. Everybody dressed in boots and furs this time and temperatures in high 80s. Entire conference dedicated to memory of late Sam Stouffer, and Friday night plenary session devoted to discussion of his work by Clyde Hart, Phil Hauser, and Herb Hyman. Woodward Award now known as AAPOR Award, reflecting wish to honor other distinguished members no longer with us. First AAPOR Award presented to Angus Campbell by President Jack Riley.

1963. Lake George, N.Y., Sagamore. Home again, where “The view is just like Switzerland” and they’re still offering Chinese Smorgasbord. It was fitting that Joe Klapper, the Sagamore’s finder (not founder), served as President this year. His address gave us some new thoughts about mass communication research. AAPOR Award for “exceptionally distinguished achievement” to George Gallup. And about time, many said. Persuaded by high priced-lawyers, business meeting okayed the idea of AAPOR becoming a corporation. Shades of Central City and Williamstown! Believe this the year when meeting distracted by two birds flying around hall, chirping loudly.

1964. Excelsior Springs, Mo., The Elms Hotel. This selected as one of AAPOR’s periodic non-Eastern convention sites, but it proved
practically inaccessible to everybody except our Kansas City member. It also chanced to be a year in which we met jointly with WAPOR, and some of our foreign colleagues found their way to Excelsior Springs from Oslo and Zagreb. And when we got there, the place was populated largely by Girl Scouts having their own convention. (But most members greatly preferred them to chimpanzees of 1961.) Effects of salubrious waters of Excelsior Springs fortunately washed away by martinis and scotch. Program marked by good session on Kennedy assassination research, Charlie Glock’s presidential address on “Images of Man and Public Opinion,” and lively discussion in business meeting about enforcing AAPOR’s “Code of Professional Ethics and Practices.”

1965. Groton, Conn., Hotel Griswold. This place shortly went out of business and most AAPOR members would say, “Good riddance”—not least Helen Crossley, who broke her leg on the doorstep gravel as she left. Good conference, though. It was the twentieth, with much nostalgia on display to interest the elderly. Thanks to Anne Zanes, photos from Central City and other memorabilia posted on walls. And it was fitting that Harry Field’s daughter was on hand to accept posthumous AAPOR Award to her father from President Herb Krugman. One memorable session in which two wise men, Stuart Chase and Elmo Roper, looked back on changes in opinions and attitudes over the last two decades.

1966. Swampscott, Mass., New Ocean House. Don’t know what happened to old Ocean house, but new one burned down shortly after we left. Was it Dan Yankelovich who voiced suspicion that they kept moving same old hotel from place to place for AAPOR conferences in New England? (When Hugh Parry told President Ray Bauer he had trouble finding this place, Ray said, “I don’t understand that. Everybody knows Swampscott is right near Lynn.”) Ray’s presidential address on “Social Indicators and Sample Surveys,” like so many AAPOR presidential addresses, very thoughtful and provocative. AAPOR Award (finally) bestowed on Hadley Cantril. Good sessions on privacy (Berelson, Chair), survey methodology (Elinson), and race riots (Biderman).

1967. Lake George, N.Y., Sagamore. Home again, after four years of wandering from resort to resort. Nothing much changed here, and everybody happy except those forced to “double up” or commute from outlying motels because of space problems. Another excellent presidential address, by Leo Bogart: “No Opinion, Don’t Know, and Maybe No Answer.” Sheatsley’s introduction of him said to be hilarious, if not insulting. AAPOR Award to Hans Zeisel. Alvin Toffler ap-
peared on session here before he wrote “Future Shock.” Quality of papers seems to get better and better. Also, first student paper competition held this year.

1968. Santa Barbara, Calif., The Miramar. Back to the West coast, first time in seven years. Joint conference with WAPOR, and many Japanese visitors. (Sheatsley and Ford attend cocktail party to greet foreign guests. Japanese looks at Paul’s badge, says “Ah NORC, we read your reports,” looks at Bob’s badge: “Ah, ATT, who you work for?”). Santa Barbara beautiful location, but some problems with hotel: overflow housed elsewhere and poor shuttle bus service; mediocre food, and small problem of crossing railroad tracks to get to ocean front motel units and beach. Fortunately, everybody stays sober and no harm done. Experiment with luncheon round tables works out well and will probably be repeated. Posthumous AAPOR Award to Elmo C. “Budd” Wilson accepted by his son, Jay. Presidential address, “AAPOR Times 21,” presents expurgated history of Association.

1969. Lake George, N.Y., Sagamore. This conference originally scheduled for Hotel Traymore, Atlantic City, but they reneged on contract, offered us unacceptable dates instead. Sagamore took us in at last minute. This was year of President Ford (Bob, that is). POQ says conference “was held May 16 to 29,” but it may only have seemed that long to some. Big turnout for session on obscenity and pornography chaired by Charlie Winick. Krugman reports real progress on AAPOR internship program. Merv Field decides AAPOR must prove its professionalism by having radical confrontation, pickets banquet, and follows Sagamore kitchen parade with sympathizers bearing signs reading “Down with Computers” and “Back to Hollerith Cards.” A considerably shaken President Ford then delivers address on “The Obstinate Employee.”

1970. Lake George, N.Y., Sagamore. And again the Sagamore. Place always draws lots of children, lots of dogs. This year hotel put on contest in which children enter dogs. Twelve dogs entered, every one won a prize: Biggest, shortest, hairiest, oldest, noisiest, etc. Also, writer from Playboy turns up, goes away disappointed: “No story here at all.” AAPOR Award fittingly presented to Arch Crossley by President Bob Bower, whose presidential address turned our attention again to problems of ethics and standards. Untimely death of Mike McGarry mourned by many. Euthemia Matsoukas succeeds her at AAPOR Secretariat.

1971. Pasadena, Calif., Huntington-Sheraton Hotel. For California, an uneventful conference. AAPOR Award to Walter Lippman in
absentia; his brief written acceptance characteristically points to fundamental problem of public opinion research and democracy. Dick Baxter in presidential address (presented in afternoon!) takes another look at AAPOR and suggests “new goal.” Good session chaired by Herb Abelson on impact of social research on government policy; e.g., studies of television, civil disorders, violence. Representatives of John Gardner’s Common Cause on the scene, but AAPOR reactions mixed. Death of Elmo Roper mourned. Secretary Cahalan reports AAPOR finally settled suit against Hotel Traymore for breach of 1969 contract for $2,000.

1972. Atlantic City, N.J., Marlborough-Blenheim Hotel. Hugh Parry had just seen film “The King of Marvin Gardens” and was disconcerted to find “the same damn extras” from the movie sitting in the same chairs and lurking around dining area. Brass sign on door in lobby says, “Ladies’ Retiring Room.” However, we did have satisfaction of viewing ongoing demolition of Hotel Traymore. Weather cold and rainy as usual at Jersey resorts this time of year. Joint meeting with WAPOR, and Jean Stoetzel here from Paris to accept AAPOR Award. Phill Davison not only delivered presidential address on “Public Opinion Research as Communication,” but also chaired session on “Public Opinion in Perspective” with fine paper by Harold Lasswell. Another program highlight: Stoetzel and Lazarsfeld discussing European origins of public opinion research.

1973. Asheville, N.C., Grove Park Inn. This unusual locale for an AAPOR conference surprisingly drew all-time high attendance: 430 persons registered, and almost all of them happy with place. Beautiful setting. Hominy grits for breakfast. Unquestionable highlight: Hal Mendelsohn’s introductory monologue at banquet and stand-up comedy routine which had people literally falling off chairs if not rolling in aisles. Tough act for Sid Hollander to follow with his presidential address, but he succeeded admirably.

1974. Our seventh (and last) visit to the Sagamore, and nothing much changed since our first in 1959, except new man leading kitchen parade. It’s sagging badly but still full of joyous memories. Al Biderman coordinated a bus connection for members to and from the Albany airport and didn’t lose anyone. Big session on “stress and change” in American politics, plus others that examined the impacts of Watergate. Joint meeting with WAPOR and impressive foreign contingent here. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann of Germany led innovation: open methodological discussion groups on secondary analysis, question wording,
etc. Another innovation, thanks to Co-Editors Bill Nicholls, Phil Harding: booklet of abstracts of papers on sale at registration desk in advance. Hal Mendelsohn’s presidential address introduced us to “Homo Mechanicus,” an obliging S-R creation of behaviorists. Barney Berelson got the AAPOR Award in absentia. Perfect weather; many enjoyed Saturday boatride on lake. Another attendance record set.

1975. Itasca, Ill. This time we’re at the golf resort of Carson Inn-Nordic Hills. A year of organizational change, culminating in proposals for new procedures for investigating alleged AAPOR code violations and for a reorganized Council. AAPOR finally computerized its operations thanks to Ron Gatty. Al Biderman brought AAPOR into the audio-visual era with a set of multi-media exhibits. POQ editorship passed from Bernie Roshco to Eleanor Singer. Herb Abelson’s presidential speech addressed a mixture of business and ethical issues. Ray Bauer got the AAPOR Award.

1976. A triumphant return to the ruggedly beautiful Grove Park Inn in Asheville, NC, in its spring glory with a splendid view of the Smokies in the hazy distance from a large veranda. The program ranged widely: from Gill Lindør’s review of the founding fathers’ public opinion conceptions to a wallowing-in-Watergate session on the fall of Richard Nixon. Joe Klapper got the AAPOR Award to great acclaim, and Dick Maisel’s presidential address took the profession to task with admirable brevity.

1977. Back at the Inn at Buck Hill Falls, Pa. for a second time. Pete Rossi’s lecture marked the passing of Paul Lazarsfeld; Shirley Star was also remembered with a special session. AAPOR’s ranks have swelled to 900, but its finances are getting shaky. Joe Belden distributed copies of the earliest known questionnaire, sponsored by the King of Spain in 1577, in honor of 400 years of survey research in the Americas. Leo Bogart got the AAPOR Award, and Irv Crespi spanned the micro and macro levels in his presidential address on attitude research and voting turnout.

1978. Hotel Roanoke, Va., a good meeting in an awful hotel! The plumbing and food were bad, the trains passing by were noisy, the manager faced down an angry bunch at the business meeting by threatening to sue AAPOR! What a way for Joe Klapper to bow out, after years of exemplary service as conference arranger. Lots of survey history at a session on “the early years,” with Paul Sheatsly, Don Cahalan, Joe Belden, and Sid Roslow telling us how it was. A program innovation: a second plenary session on Thursday night. Phill Davison
got the AAPOR Award, and our first woman president, Hope Klapper, delivered the shortest presidential address ever given, on children and television.

1979. Back at Buck Hill Falls and rainy weather (again). Why does the sun seem to appear only on Sunday morning? Membership crossed the 1,000 level, and finances were improving steadily. Merv Field got the AAPOR Award and Reuben Cohen’s presidential address dealt with the need for realistic standards and steady improvements in our methods. Big changes in AAPOR organization and in the code of ethics proposed.

1980. Kings Island Inn in Cincinnati, good weather and parachutists coming down into the theme park next door during our cocktail hour. A major session on opinion research pioneers with exceptional papers on polling in France, West Germany, and Great Britain. An ad hoc committee on the history of AAPOR was appointed, and the links between polls, media, and politics become even more prominent as program topics. Shirley Star got the AAPOR Award posthumously and Jack Elinson’s presidential talks regaled us with the story behind the 7-steps-to-longevity Alameda health prescriptions.

1981. Buck Hill Falls Inn for the fourth time: a popular choice despite bad weather (again). Not since 1948 have the pollsters been as wide of the mark as in 1980 presidential. Just like Louis Bean in days gone by, Reagan’s pollster, Dick Wirthlin, knew it all the time. Very surprising for a campaign where the numbers didn’t change until the weekend before the election. The number of papers and sessions keep growing, as does AAPOR’s savings account. Les Frankel won the AAPOR Award and Helen Kaufman urged heightened concern with research quality in her presidential speech.

1982. Tally ho! The Hunt Valley Inn in the Maryland countryside: a new departure, a modern resort hotel, no real place to sit and schmooze. Once again it rained. “AAPOR members aren’t getting any older” was the amazing conclusion drawn from an analysis of membership age data. The AAPOR Archive to be established at the University of Chicago Library. AAPOR finances have risen like a phoenix from the deficit days of 1974–75; over $100,000 surplus this year. Thirteen Princeton undergraduates in Mike Kagay’s politics class won the Student Award this year, and almost all of them showed up to claim it. Debbie Hensler generated a lot of controversy at her session on need for AAPOR code revisions. Al Gollin had to calm the crowd at a plenary session on Reagan’s policies affecting social research. The AAPOR Award went to Paul Sheatsley, the WAPOR Award to Stanley Payne.
Seymour Sudman underscored the power of polling in his presidential speech on presidents’ uses of polls.

1983. Back at Buck Hill Falls for the fifth time in ten years. Alarm bells interrupted sessions held in a room rigged to protect valuable carpets and furniture. Sad to say, we’ve outgrown the capacity of the Inn to house AAPOR. Charles Tilly regaled his plenary session audience with historical examples of collective protest as public opinion. Bud Roper, saying he might be too inebriated by Saturday night, broke precedents all over the place, with a lunchtime presidential speech on the art-science of polling and presentation of three AAPOR Awards to four winners: Paul Perry, Wilbur Schramm, and Jack and Matilda Riley. Mystery guest, Harold Mendelsohn, topped his 1973 introduction of Sid Hollander. Again, we forgot to tape it.

1984. Lake Lawn Lodge, Delavan, Wis.: a maze of walkways between buildings proved useful. It rained there too! WAPOR had a full day of sessions ahead of AAPOR: another first. Ithiel Pool won the AAPOR Award posthumously, and Mark Abrams was given the Dinkerman (WAPOR) Award. Laure Sharp’s lunchtime presidential speech focused on the social bond between respondents and interviewers. A hot debate at a plenary on exit polls, chaired by Ron Milavsky, which was ultimately printed in POQ and sent to federal and state legislative leaders. AAPOR’s shock and sense of loss over Joe Klapper’s death were palpable throughout the conference.

1985. The Americana Great Gorge, McAfee, N.J.: a former Playboy hotel (ghosts of bunnies past) with cheerleaders and white haired ladies’ groups meeting at the same time: what a zoo! George Gallup had died after the last AAPOR conference; he and Joe Klapper had plenaries dedicated to their memory. Arch Crossley’s death also acknowledged. The old-timers still with us told tall tales at a “back in the olden days” session, with Herb Hyman as discussant going first! Big changes: AAPOR now owns POQ outright and its publisher will be the University of Chicago Press; also a revised AAPOR code has been drafted by a “constitutional convention,” chaired by Debbie Hensler. Al Gollin’s presidential speech took up Lazarsfeld’s theme on the uses of history in studying public opinion; Dan Katz’s eloquent AAPOR Award acceptance speech was deeply moving. Eleanor Singer got a surprise award commemorating her eleven years as POQ editor.

1986. The Don CeSar, St. Petersburg, a perfect AAPOR hotel! Warm sunshine and WAPOR help swell attendance to a new high; we needed four overflow hotels. A session in tribute to Herb Hyman; another eminence has passed on. New TV measurement systems and me-
dia credibility were the star attractions at plenaries. The book exhibit and personal computer analytical services have become big-time accessories to the meeting. Howard Schuman’s lunchtime address took issue with stereotypical poll questions and reporting of “marginals.” Phil Converse got the AAPOR Award; Jean Stoetzel received the Dinerman (WAPOR) Award in absentia. A high point at the banquet was conference memoirs by AAPOR wits: Herb Krugman lamented the passing of the “good old days.” Translation: no sleep, lots of all-night poker and pool. Hal Mendelsohn and Dick Baxter told of almost swearing off post-banquet beverages. It seems that a chimp in a sailor suit got on their elevator alone. On the next floor, the door opened, and there was a woman in a matching sailor suit. Annoyed at the chimp, she reached in and pulled him out. Unknown to Hal and Dick, the Simian Society of America was meeting in the hotel.

1987. The Lodge, Hershey, Pa.: a modern resort with a convention center next to a theme park in splendid springtime weather. (We’ve come a long way from the Sagamore in the rain.) AAPOR’s affluence and membership continue to grow; six chapters now active. Ethical controversies were aired at a plenary matching Barbara Bailar and Al Gollin, with ethicist Deni Elliot as commentator. Media and politics dominated the program as usual, but drugs, AIDS, and other lively social issues got attention. One session gave a foretaste of the AAPOR history with talks by four chapter writers. Ron Milavsky’s presidential speech took media poll analysts to task; Seymour Sudman and Norman Bradburn jointly won the AAPOR Award. A “mellow” meeting, all in all.

1988. The Inn on the Park, Toronto: A first-ever at a non-US meeting site, and another fine resort-convention center. Concern was expressed that “AAPOR may be getting too large”; oh, for the marching-and-chowder days? A wired-up, “press-now” quick-polling technology evoked wild reaction and liberal bent by attendees at a plenary session. Shere Hite faced off against Tom Smith, and Jean Converse met her admirers at an author-critics session on her survey research history book. AIDS got a lot of program space, as did democratization, perestroika, and other foreign policy issues. Eleanor Singer told us how to stretch the limits of survey research in her presidential speech, and Bud Roper got the AAPOR Award (as did his father and the Roper Center before him). Louis Guttmann was given the Dinerman (WAPOR) Award posthumously. Warren Mitofsky played cakemaster, celebrating POQ’s 50th anniversary issue.
1989. Back to the Don CeSar in St Pete, and a first-ever AAPOR T-shirt run (“If we want your opinion, we’ll ask for it!”). Once again, AAPOR has difficulty with Republicans: a plenary on 1988’s Willie Horton and other political ads drew hisses from a few outraged folks. Lots of hot tubing under the stars and rum drinks in the sun. Media and methods dominated the program; a moving tribute was paid at a memorial session for Paul Sheatsley by his many friends. Warren Mitofsky spoke out forthrightly for new standards with meaningful disclosure spelling out the limits of methods in his presidential speech. Gladys and Kurt Lang were the very surprised, but delighted, winners of the AAPOR Award. Hal Mendelsohn did a star turn at the banquet.

1990. Lancaster, Pa., at a Sheraton resort and convention center in the Amish country. Quite a contrast: a time warp outside, everything up to date inside. Attendance records were set. WAPOR addressed the global crises of AIDS and the environment. A plenary on glasnost and perestroika brought three Soviet opinion researchers together: their frankness was an eye-opener for many. Media polling took its lumps at another plenary. Les Kish was roasted and toasted by his friends at a special session and responded with wit and wisdom. Chuck Cowan, the Joe Klapper of the 1980’s, announced his retirement as conference arranger. Phil Meyer delivered his presidential address on polling as science and as journalism without reference to written text: another first! Herb Krugman received the AAPOR Award.