3. News from BS-Members

Highly Structured Stochastic Systems
is a new initiative in European Statistics. The European Science Foundation (ESF) is funding a Scientific Programme on Highly Structured Stochastic Systems. This follows the earlier, very successful, ESF Scientific Network with the same title. The Programme will run from 1997 to 2000.

Highly Structured Stochastic Systems (HSSS) combine simple local relations to build — via conditional independence — stochastic models that exhibit great complexity. Such complex stochastic models have found applications in areas as diverse as expert systems, genetics, and statistical mechanics. The needs of these areas have in turn stimulated important theoretical developments. By emphasizing common ideas and structures, such as graphical, hierarchical and spatial models, and techniques, such as Markov Chain Monte Carlo methods and local exact computation, the Network has already succeeded in stimulating cross-disciplinary work in stochastic systems. The new Scientific Programme is funded at a higher level to build on this success.

New challenges for research include developing diagnostic and analytic tools for model criticism; understanding sensitivity of models to local specifications; designing new MCMC algorithms, identifying limits of causal interpretation in networks representing observational studies; introducing nonparametric elements into graphical models; extending the theory and methodology to systems that develop over time.

To help meet these and other challenges, the programme will arrange focused workshops, summer schools (see p. 18), open conferences, and support for research visits.

Anyone interested in HSSS and in the new ESF Scientific Programme may join the HSSS email discussion list. Simply send a message to

mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk

and put in the body of your message the words "join hsss" followed by your name. You will then receive information about how to use the list. The list is open for any discussion of matters relating to Highly Structured Stochastic Systems, and will be a way that the Programme's management committee will publicise HSSS activities.

There is also the Programme's web page:

http://www.maths.nott.ac.uk/hsss/

which contains a growing amount of information about the Programme, its activities and how interested researchers might participate.

John Kornak
(HSSS information assistant)

Willem Rutger van Zwet
Professor of Statistics of the University of Leiden and William Newman Professor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was awarded a Honorary Doctorate by the Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, on May 29, 1997, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the mathematical statistics and, in his many capacities (IMS: Member Council, Editor of the Annals of Statistics, President; ISI: Vice-President and President-Elect; Bernoulli Society: Chair of the European Regional Committee, Member of Council and President, among many others), but also personally, to the permanent development of the international statistical community and the international scientific contacts.

The Prague statisticians have been happy to enjoy the personal scientific contacts with Professor van Zwet since the seventies, still under the life of Jaroslav Hájek. They have always appreciated his interest and support for their research, particularly during the difficult political régime in their country. We have learnt and still are learning a lot from him and we shall always consider it as a honor and as a privilege. The ceremony, in the presence of the Chancellors of several Czech and Slovak Universities, following the original protocol of the oldest university in the Central Europe, celebrating its 650th anniversary in 1998, was an expression of our profound appreciation for his work and personal qualities.

Jana Jureckova, Prague

Nordic-Math-Job
was founded on the 14th of February this year. It is an on-line service collecting information on vacant academic positions in the Nordic departments of Mathematics and Statistics.

http://www.maths.lth.se/nordic/index.html

Nordic-Math-Job is now run in cooperation with the Mathematical Society of all Scandinavian countries.

To make this new opening of the Nordic market as successful as possible the aim of Nordic-Math-Job is to collect information on ALL vacant positions.

If you have information on a vacant academic job in a Nordic department of Mathematics or Statistics, not included in the list above, please send it (in the standard form) to nordic@maths.lth.se

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