



# The PAPOR Trail

## PAPOR 2007

# Meet in San Francisco



The Golden Gate Bridge, completed in 1937, spans from San Francisco to Sausalito

The 2007 PAPOR Annual Conference December 6 and 7 in San Francisco will focus on top political and social topics.

The annual two-day PAPOR meeting will be at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel at San Francisco's Union Square for the second year. This is the fourth year that the PAPOR conference has been in San Francisco.

Research professionals primarily from the western United States will gather to discuss pressing and controversial topics facing voters in upcoming elections.

Hotel reservations for PAPOR 2007 can be made by contacting the hotel directly at 800-227-5480. To obtain the contracted rate of \$149 per night (single or double occupancy, plus taxes), attendees should mention the PAPOR Annual Conference. The room rate should be

available for several nights just prior to and following the conference.

The hotel provides complimentary wireless high-speed Internet access in all rooms and restaurants ranging from a coffee shop to an upscale 1930s-style nightclub.

San Francisco International Airport is 14 miles from the hotel, and Oakland International Airport is 18 miles away. Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) trains connect both airports with the Powell Street BART station, which is 3 blocks from the hotel.

As in previous years, the conference will provide an opportunity for college students to enter a student paper competition, with the first-place winner receiving transportation and hotel expenses to attend the meeting (see p. 2).

## Who, what, and where is PAPOR?

Think PAPOR, and you think of the Pacific Coast of the United States, from California up through Washington. If you think that's all of PAPOR, think again.

PAPOR's more than 150 members come from at least 17 U.S. states, including nine Western states. About one-third of members are from the San Francisco Bay Area, with two-thirds of all PAPOR members coming from all of California.

About half of PAPOR's members are from industry, and about one-third of

PAPOR members are involved in academia at 27 universities. About 4 in 10 PAPOR members work directly in research and analytic work. A similar proportion belong to both PAPOR and AAPOR.

### Inside this issue:

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| PAPOR's history                    | 2 |
| Recap of PAPOR 2006 Annual Meeting | 3 |
| President's Message                | 4 |

# Remembering how PAPOR started

**By Susan H. Pinkus**  
**Director, L.A. Times Poll**

PAPOR has an illustrative history—with a small cadre of researchers and academics starting the chapter in the 1960's. The early years started with Mervin Field, who started the California Poll; Bill Nicholls, director of SRC; Will Pilcher, who worked for Levi Strauss; and Berkeley academics, among others.

The early years had intermittent conferences or one day sessions at the university. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, PAPOR was resuscitated with the help of Chuck Rund, president of Charlton Research. During that time, more members were recruited, and an attempt was made to have yearly conferences at Asilomar, not far from Monterey. It was a small group that talked and debated over hot political, academic, and research issues of the day.

The weekend conferences were stimulating and successful. But it was not a cohesive group—most of the members at that time were from northern California, with a smidgen of Southern Californians thrown in and no interaction once the conference was over.

In the mid-1980s, a group of public opinion researchers continued what Rund had started, including Mark DiCamillo, director of the

California Poll, Debra Jay, President of Field Research, and myself, because we realized how important it was to share new ideas and problems presented to researchers, network with other researchers, and also to see what new, interesting research was being done.

To keep the chapter alive, we four would alternate executive council positions. We would also put on programs, alternating between northern and southern California. Plus a yearly conference was still held at Asilomar. This went on for a number of years, with just a small number of members trying to get PAPOR on its feet.

In the late 1990's, AAPOR, the national organization, became more active in helping the chapters, and they gave us the names of members who lived in the western region of the United States, as well as guidance as to how to motivate our members.

Starting in 2001, with Pinkus as president and Rund as vice president, PAPOR became a more active Chapter. We enlarged the membership to include researchers from the western states (Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, and Nevada) and got more of the members involved.

Mollyann Brodie from the Kaiser Foundation became the first president of the new, improved PAPOR and with her enthusiasm and activism, the Chapter thrived. PAPOR now has over 100 members with more than 50 attending the yearly conference held in San Francisco.

We have panels that are important to the industry as a whole (i.e., cell phone usage, non-response rates, politics), including panels that also have significance for the western region; we also offer a short course at the conference, which has included courses from Don Dillman and Jon Krosnick. Plus we have a plenary that has brought AAPOR presidents to the conference.

For me, it has been such a joy to see PAPOR blossom. I feel like a proud parent watching the chapter grow. I hope you get a chance to come to our conference in December to network and interact with the members.

## **PAPOR student paper winners**

College and university students are invited to enter the PAPOR student paper competition, which offers a cash prize and paid trip to the 2007 PAPOR Annual Conference. The 2006 winners were:

- First prize: Lindsay Nielson, Brigham Young University, "Mobilizing the Early Voter."
- Second prize: Matthew Atkinson, UCLA, "Partisan Generational Effects: How the National Mood during a Cohort's Adolescent Years Shapes its Lifelong Macropartisanship."

# PAPOR 2006: Elections and more elections

By **Floyd Ciruli**

The third consecutive PAPOR conference in San Francisco, and the first on a Christmas-decorated Union Square, was a success. More than 60 participants joined panelists of national and international researchers and journalists on topics from the power-shifting 2006 U.S. election to the razor-thin Mexican presidential election.

The annual conference, which is the highlight of the PAPOR year, provides a unique western United States focus on politics and policy. The emphasis is on the topical, providing a variety of perspectives and open conversation. The plenary panel assembled a Mexico City pollster, a Mexico-based U.S. journalist, and a Berkeley Latin American scholar to analyze the July Mexican presidential election.

**Francisco Abundis** of Parametria, **Rob Collier** of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and **Dwight Dyer** of UC-Berkeley Center for Latin American Studies described the growth in importance of polling to Mexican politics and media coverage. There were a number of similarities with the close 2000 U.S. Presidential election. For instance, a final decision required more than 60 days of dispute and deliberation (the 2000 U.S. election required 36 days).

## Elections in Western States

One of the most popular regularly repeated panels is the review of politics and elections in western states. **Floyd Ciruli**, who chaired the panel, presented an overview

of the 2006 election in the west with a Democratic pick-up of a governor (CO), a U.S. Senate seat (MT) and four congressional seats (CA, AR-2, CO). Ciruli argued that Colorado's shift along the color spectrum from red in 2002 to bright blue in 2006 was a harbinger for Democratic ascendance in the mountain West, and not merely a local outlier.

**Mark DiCamillo** of Field Research Corp. described California Gov. Schwarzenegger's re-positioning and re-election after his poor performance in the 2005 election. This was a personal, not party, victory, as Democrats continue to dominate the remaining statewide offices. Californians' attitudes toward the future and their willingness to support public investment were analyzed by **Mark Baldassare** of the Public Policy Institute of California. Data from November infrastructure bond initiatives and PPIC polls were used. The methodological challenge of incorporating high levels of absentee voters into exit polls was the focus of **Jill Darling**, assistant polling director for the *Los Angeles Times*. Finally, the election was put in perspective by pointed and humorous comments of the dean of California's political columnists, **Dan Walters** of the *Sacramento Bee*.

## U.S. National Election

**Jon Cohen**, new polling director of the *Washington Post*, chaired a panel on the predicted, but still dramatic, November election results. The depth and breath

of the Democratic victory and an electorate that wanted a break from intense Washington partisan wars were described by CBS pollster **Anthony Salvanto**. A shift in allegiance among military families to the benefit of Democrats was presented by **Amy Gershkoff** of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. A study of congressional districts where voters on large military bases expressed more concerns about "staying too long in Iraq" than "worrying about cutting and running" explored the potential for a future realignment of defense-oriented voters toward Democrats. **Doug Strand** of the UC-Berkeley Survey Research Center presented an update of an ongoing data set from the Political Agendas and Citizens Engagement Survey, which has been tracking the national electorate since 2004. The data confirmed that the Iraq War was the dominant influence in voter evaluation of the Bush presidency.

## Methodological Panel

The conference methodological panel was organized by PAPOR chair **Liz Hamel** of the Kaiser Family Foundation. **Eric Taylor** of Western Wats presented results from an experiment that manipulated four questionnaire design variables and the implications for web-based survey methods. **Doug Strand** described response-bias impact on comparisons of data from surveys conducted over time. **Jon Krosnick** of Stanford University described a

(Continued on page 4)

# Letter from the president

Richard Rands, PAPOR president

It's that time again: It's the time when public opinion and political opinion meld into one huge hodgepodge that seems to defy definition. As students of public opinion, we have committed our best efforts to tame the beast. Blogs and wikis run rampant on every subject, and every crazy idea is readily accessed by mil-

lions. With reality seeming more orchestrated than real, who can pull sense from it all?

Public opinion can be fickle during political campaigns. Tears at the wrong time can turn the tide against a candidate. Perspiration during a TV debate might spell the end of a candidacy. An indiscretion by one

candidate is overlooked, but a similar action dooms another. Candidates rise and fall for reasons that have little to do with the important issues.

Can public opinion researchers serve the profession in this environment? Can careful research and analysis make political campaigns understandable? Can we do more than report trends after the fact? Can we feel good about what we do?

The answer is, of course we can! A new generation of bright and clever practitioners steps in when the mentors step aside. Our challenge is to maintain the legacy of AAPOR and to continue raising the bar for research standards. Let's all seek ways to engage the future leaders of AAPOR.

## New position for former PAPOR president Cohen

Californian and recent president of PAPOR Jon Cohen recently was named the director of polling for the *Washington Post*. He is already providing must-read analysis of the latest Presidential nomination polls, and you can see his byline with *Washington Post* political correspondents such as Dan Balz.

Cohen has a master's degree in

political science from UC-Berkeley and was the associate survey director of the respected Public Policy Institute of California from 2002 through 2004. In 2005 and 2006, Cohen was assistant director of the polling unit at ABC News. With his ABC colleague Gary Langer, he published "Voters and Values in 2004 Election" in *Public Opinion Quarterly* in 2005.

## PAPOR 2006: Elections, elections

(Continued from page 3)

new approach to constructing national random samples that can then be used for regular on-line data collection. Finally, the importation of cell phones into RDD survey samples was approached from a practical point of view by **John Hall** of Mathematica Policy Research.

### Immigration, Minority Issues

The final conference panel described Latino voters' impact on the 2006 election after a large build-up of expectation from political action surrounding the ille-

gal immigration issue. Public Policy Institute of California's **Sonja Petek** and **Renatta DeFever** presented the immigration issue and the Latino California vote in 2006.

### Short Course

The conference always presents at least one short course. **Bill Jacoby** of Michigan State University examined the utility of multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) for analyzing public opinion data. His approach used easy-to-understand examples to allow participants to rapidly apply MDS techniques in their own research.

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