



Letter from your President...



Dear Fellow-forecasters:

I have found out that nowadays the President really needs this column to report to you what is going on in IIF. It hasn't always been so. When I joined the Board back in 1993 the contacts were very sparse between Directors and we had just one Board meeting every year at the ISF. It continued like that for many years, until e-mail opened up the opportunity to have *electronic meetings*. These have become more and more frequent. Two years ago I sincerely thought that we could substantially shorten the Board meetings because of closer e-mail contacts. I was wrong. During the last few years, we have also witnessed IIF workshops and Forecasting Summits filling the void between our annual meetings.

The latest *workshop* was a joint event with Leipzig University, Germany. December 16-17. Its theme was the challenging: "The Future of Forecasting". Nearly all speakers were from IIF. The

Nestor of economic forecasting, Victor Zarnowitz was there. A nicely organized mini-conference, and maybe a much needed IIF bridgehead in Germany. A special *IJF* issue of the talks is being planned.

You received issue #2 of *Foresight* in October and #3 may have reached you when you read this. There are high-quality articles standing in line to be published in our new journal. We were afraid there would not be enough material for a journal that does not provide academic merits to authors, but we have been proved wrong. Happily, subscriptions are coming in steadily. Still, we need many more, so please help us to get subscribers. Your own library must have *Foresight*!

The Board has worked out a long-term plan for *Foresight*. Likewise has a subcommittee been busy nailing down the goals of IIF in general. This plan will soon be made public.

Our economy is still in good shape, despite expected losses when starting up *Foresight*. The San Antonio ISF brought in a nice surplus, thanks Benito and Tom!

Advertising the *Forecast Certificate* has started and we are expecting interest among universities. Work on this project has been going on for a long time, and I'm happy that we finally got this far.

IIF has now had an *Executive Manager* for four months. This has not just taken off some work from the Board, but it has also opened up new activities, such as getting more members. Here Pam has been very successful.

Soon you will be able to elect three new Directors. I will stay on the Board as Ex-President for another two years. But since this is the last Oracle before I resign as President on 30 April, let me thank you all for trust and support! These years have been busy - but also very, very rewarding. I wish the incoming President, Geoff Allen, good luck!

See you all in Santander!

Lars-Erik



From the Desk of the IIF Business Manager

Who would have thought that a brief career in business forecasting with Polaroid Corp. many years ago would have led me to managing an organization committed to forecasting excellence? Where was the IIF when I needed it? This, in a nutshell, is our challenge – offering our 25 years of knowledge and experience in the field of forecasting to the broader community and bridging the gap between academics and practitioners.



Towards meeting this goal, we have introduced *FORESIGHT*, The International Journal of Applied Forecasting. *FORESIGHT* seeks to advance the practice of forecasting by offering practical, high-quality, peer-reviewed articles to forecasting analysts, managers and students. The positive response from you, our members, and the forecasting community has been overwhelming! The *FORESIGHT* team of editors and contributors are committed to continuing to bring you the high quality which you have come to expect from the IIF.

Another IIF project, is the International Symposium on Forecasting (ISF) which will be held in Santandar, Spain on June 11-14, 2006. Reasserting our commitment to broadening our community, the theme of this year's symposium is *Forecasting Challenges in a Changing World Environment*. We plan to focus on new developments in forecasting and to encourage discussion of challenges and issues by participants from a wide range of fields. For more information on the ISF, visit www.isf2006.org.

If you haven't been a regular visitor to our web site, www.forecasters.org, please take another look! We've been adding more news, current events, the IIF Certification Program, SAS Grants and job opportunities. We are also in the process of re-energizing our site. Look for exciting and dramatic changes in 2006!

The first four months on the job have been engaging, dynamic and non-stop! I look forward to working with you and meeting you in Spain.

Pam Stroud

News and Publications of IIF Members

- **Carolyn I. Allmon**, long-time member of IIF, who formerly led demand forecasting efforts for the Tennant Company, joined the Snack Foods division of ConAgra Foods as their Senior Demand Planner for Store Brands on December 12, 2005.
- **Scott Armstrong's** book *Principles of Forecasting: A Handbook for Researchers and Practitioners*, published by Kluwer/Springer, was voted as the "Favourite Book on Forecasting for the First 25 Years" by forecasting experts including academics, practitioners, and educators. The award was presented at the 25th International Symposium on Forecasting in San Antonio, Texas, in June 2005. The book is now in its 5th printing and over 100,000 people have visited the book's web page at <http://www-marketing.wharton.upenn.edu/forecast/handbook.html>
All of the 27 known reviews of *Principles of Forecasting* are in full-text at that site.
- Papers by **Scott Armstrong and Kesten Green** were presented at the Sherman Kent School and at MITRE. These related to the use of evidence-based methods for predicting decisions made in conflict situations. They summarised findings from papers that are now available in full-text at <http://conflictforecasting.com>.
- **Rohit Dhawan** who is currently a PhD student at University of Sydney, Australia, working in neural networks for time series forecasting, was awarded an IEEE (computational Intelligence Society) travel grant to attend the Latin American Summer School on Computational Intelligence (EVIC 2005).
- **Beatriz Fariña** is in the process of publishing two papers presented last year at the International Symposium on Forecasting (Texas 2005). They present a new methodology to study the business cycle, in particular she has developed a new 'concept' for the business cycle. She is also spending some months in US (Michigan)



trying to apply the same methodology to study the US business cycle and hopes to present the results at the next ISF in Santander.

- **Tom Fullerton**, who is involved in The UTEP Border Region Modeling Project, is now accepting orders for Borderplex Economic Outlook: 2005-2007. Generated with the 189-equation Borderplex Econometric Model, this report contains comprehensive historical and forecast data for Las Cruces, New Mexico; El Paso, Texas; Ciudad Juárez, Mexico; and Chihuahua City, Mexico. For further information and an order sheet please email tomf@utep.edu.
- **Tsung-Hsien Tsai**, is currently a PhD candidate of Department of Transportation and Communication Management Science at National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan. Mr. Tsai is working on the development of Neural Networks for short-term railway passenger demand forecasting.
- **Agustin Maravall**, a member of the International Institute of Forecasters and Chief Economist at the Bank of Spain, has been awarded the 2005 "Rey Jaime I Prize in Economics." The prize honors scientific research in Spain in the fields of basic science, economics, environment, medicine, and new technologies. It is sponsored by the Spanish Royal House, the "Fundación Premios Rey Jaime I", and the "Generalitat Valenciana." The selection committee included 20 past Nobel Prize winners, and the prize contains a net financial reward of 100,000 euros. Maravall, a winner of the 2004 Julius Shiskin Award for Economic Statistics (sponsored by the National Association of Business Economists, the Washington Statistical Society, and the American Statistical Association), received the Prize in recognition of his research in applied time series analysis and of its worldwide impact notably at economic agencies and institutions.

SAS News

SAS Company News

SAS Forecast Server has been named one of the "Trend-Setting Products of the Year for 2005" by KMWorld magazine. This ranking, published in the September 2005 issue, highlights innovative products that make a significant impact on the marketplace. "Our panelists noted that SAS Forecast Server creates automated, accurate forecasts quickly and easily, allowing companies to make bold predictions and plan for the future more effectively," said Hugh McKellar, editor-in-chief of KMWorld. "We are happy to again recognize SAS for its significant contributions to the marketplace and for creating real trend-setting ingenuity."

SAS Institute will be hosting its first ever F2006 Business Forecasting Conference at world headquarters in Cary, NC, June 5-6. For event details see www.sas.com/f2006.

SAS Personnel News

Udo Sglavo, Product Manager at SAS International, has written the white paper "Managing the Future." Udo discusses the four types of activities involved in managing the future -- forecasting, risk management, decision making, and planning -- and shows a way of linking them together. To request a copy, contact Udo at udo.sglavo@eur.sas.com.

Michael Gilliland, Marketing Manager at SAS institute, has published "Danger Danger -- The Perils of Operational Performance Benchmarks" in the December 6, 2005 edition of APICS e-News. Mike has also written "Seven Aphorisms of Business Forecasting," to appear in the Spring 2006 issue of Journal of Business Forecasting.

Terry Woodfield, Statistical Services Specialist at SAS Institute, is conducting a workshop on "Basics in Causal Modeling and Forecasting" at the Forecasting Summit, February 13, 2006 in Orlando, FL (www.forecasting-summit.com). In conjunction with the conference, SAS will be demonstrating its new Forecast Server software for large-scale automation of the forecasting process.

Brenda Wolfe, Product Manager at SAS Institute, is presenting "Exploring the Intersection of Large Scale Forecasting, Time Series Mining and Visualization" at the INFORMS Roundtable, February 12-13, in Los Angeles.



The International Institute of Forecasters Announces SAS Grants to Support Research on Principles of Forecasting for year 2006

Over twenty years of forecasting research has seen major changes in the theoretical ideas underpinning forecasting effectiveness. However, there has been less impact on forecasting practice. For the fourth year, after the award of three grants in 2003, two in 2004 and two more in 2005, the IIF, in collaboration with SAS, is proud to announce financial support for research on how to improve business forecasting principles and practice. This consists of two \$5,000 grants. Applications of not more than 4 pages should be submitted to the IIF Office by 30th September 2006. The application should include:

- a letter of support from the home institution where the researcher is based
- a brief (4 page) c.v.
- a budget and work-plan for the project .

Criteria for the award of the grant will include likely impact on forecasting principles and practice, although funding is not exclusively reserved for these topics. For a description of primary research needs, see:
<http://www-marketing.wharton.upenn.edu/forecast/researchers.html>.

Consideration will be given to the track record of the researcher and whether supplementary funding is likely to be gained. The awards will be made through a committee appointed by the IIF directors. The results of the application will be made within about 10 weeks of the closing date.

Grant recipients are required to author a paper reporting on their research for possible publication in the International Journal of Forecasting.

Full details are available below and on the Forecasting Principles web site:
<http://www-marketing.wharton.upenn.edu/forecast/welcome.html>.

Funding details

1. SAS will provide \$10,000 per year to the IIF to fund two SAS Forecasting Research Grants. These funds and the grants will be administered by the IIF.
2. These grants will be for targeted research that aims to improve the state of the art in business forecasting principles and practice. A committee appointed by the IIF will designate research objectives, solicit proposals, award the grants, and oversee completion of sponsored research. The research objectives will be drawn largely from the "Research Needs" identified on the forecasting principles page, and the committee would have oversight on the specification of these needs.

Special Interest Group Invitation

Typically, researchers search within their own fields (such as crime, economics, finance, medicine, military, demography, earnings, environment, population, production and inventory control, natural resources, politics, retail sales, sports, technology, transportation, weather), or perhaps even within narrower areas (such as automotive, earthquakes, epidemics, pharmaceuticals, hurricanes, movies, terrorism, and utilities). To date, the IIF has failed to reach some of these groups. Perhaps the key way to reach them is through Special Interest groups at <http://forecastingprinciples.com>.

You are invited to organize an SIG page. The IIF will support your efforts to develop a special interest groups by handling all web related matters and by promoting the SIG. The political forecasting SIG is a good example: In an October 2005 search on "forecasting and elections," this SIG was #2 in a Google search that produced half a million sites. The site attracted about 90,000 visits its first year because it provided forecasts for the U.S.



presidential election. Other SIGs, such as those for conflicts and crime have also been successful. In addition to providing a valuable service, the page master can become a focal point for research in a given area.

If you are interested in developing a SIG, contact Scott Armstrong (armstrong@wharton.upenn.edu).

Forecasting Trees Continue to Grow

Substantial refinements have been made to the Forecasting Selection and Methodology Trees at <http://forecastingprinciples.com>. These include:

1. Re-labelling the “econometric models” node with the more inclusive term “causal models.”
2. Supplying missing links from conjoint analysis on the Selection Tree.
3. Inclusion of “Judgmental Adjustments” on the Selection Tree

The trees continue to grow in popularity; each had more than 20,000 visits last year.

Communicating with Practitioners and Academicians

One way to gain visibility of your research discoveries is to send a short description to Manyworlds.com. They have a team of excellent editors and can accurately translate your findings into a description that is useful to managers. Contact Jasmine Dang. Her email address is j.dang@manyworlds.com.

For those who have not already done so, consider posting working papers and published papers at RePEc.org. Your recent papers in major journals will be automatically listed once you register. This will make your work better known to researchers in economics and related fields.

New Forecasting Competition

Michele Hibon (INSEAD, France), Peg Young (US Department of Transportation) and Miriam Scaglione (University of Applied Sciences, Valais, Switzerland) are initiating a new forecasting competition – on transportation data. Similar in style to the previous M-competitions, this research will require experts in forecasting to practice their techniques on numerous time series. Different in style to the previous M-competitions, the data all pertain to a particular sector: transportation. If you are an expert with a particular forecasting technique and wish to participate, or for any inquiries, please contact Michele Hibon at michele.hibon@insead.edu.



Peg Young & Michele Hibon



Nominations of Future IIF Directors

There will shortly be an election of directors of the IIF.

The election will take place in March. The retiring directors are: Lars-Erik Oller (as retiring president he will remain a member of the Board for two years), Nigel Meade and Len Tashman.

Only Len has expressed a willingness to stand again. Accordingly, the list of candidates submitted by the Nominating Committee is Dilek Önkal, Nada Sanders and Len Tashman.

As required by Bylaw 3, clause 4, of the Institute's bylaws, I am informing you of the list of candidates and invite you to submit petitions for additional nominations within the next four weeks. Any nominee must be a member of the Institute and the Bylaw further states that "Such petitions should be supported by at least ten signatures of current members, and a brief biography". For the purposes of this bylaw, an email message from a member nominating a candidate will be regarded as a signature on a petition.

After March 1, I will send you information on how to vote in the election and biographies of the final candidates.

Send all nominations to Geoff Allen at allen@resecon.umass.edu.

Current nominees

- **Dilek Önkal**

Dilek Önkal is a Professor of Decision Sciences at the Faculty of Business Administration at Bilkent University where she previously served as Acting Dean. She received her B.A. from Boğaziçi University and her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, where she taught prior to joining Bilkent. Her work appeared in book chapters and in journals such as the *International Journal of Forecasting*, *Foresight*, *Decision Support Systems*, *Journal of Forecasting*, *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* and others.

IIF Board of Directors Statement of Activity

My research focuses primarily on judgmental forecasting and I am an associate editor of the *International Journal of Forecasting*. I've been regularly attending the ISF meetings since 1993, with a total of 16 papers presented. Furthermore, I was an organizing committee member for the *16th International Symposium on Forecasting* held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996. I believe that the International Symposia on Forecasting provide essential platforms for sharing crucial information and knowledge in the forecasting field. ISFs also present opportunities for actively pursuing initiatives to improve practitioner-researcher interaction that is vital to the forecasting community. Planning and organization of symposia and enhancement of practitioner-researcher interactions provide the two main venues for my proposed contributions to IIF.

- **Len Tashman**

Len Tashman is an emeritus professor emeritus at the University of Vermont, Director of the Institute for Forecasting Education, and Founding Editor of *Foresight: The International Journal of Applied Forecasting*. He is serving his first term (2002-06) on the IIF Board of Directors, during which he developed the program of IIF co-sponsorship of the Forecasting Summit, created the practitioner track at ISF Merida (2003), engineered the creation of *Foresight*, upgraded the IIF website, and played a significant role in professionalizing the administration of the IIF.

IIF Board of Directors Statement of Activity

Main Goals for Second Term as IIF Director

I will work to develop more effective collaborations between academics and practitioners in bringing knowledge of best practices to the professional forecaster. The channels for these collaborations include articles in *Foresight*, presentations at the ISF and Forecasting Summits, and possibly the new IIF certificate programs.



I will continue to oversee or support upgrades to the IIF website, particularly in these areas: 1. Enhancing site visibility on search engines. 2. Instituting a document store for purchase of individual papers 3. Creating sponsored links for purchase by forecasting organizations 4. Unifying the IIF and ISF faces to the public.

Finally, I will continue coordinating efforts to expand the Foresight subscriber base with efforts to increase renewals of expired IIF memberships.

- **Nada R. Sanders**

Nada R. Sanders is Professor of Operations Management and Logistics at the Raj Sooin College of Business at Wright State University. She received her PhD and MBA from the Ohio State University. Dr. Sanders is author of numerous articles that have appeared in journals such as *Decision Sciences*, *Journal of Business Logistics*, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *Supply Chain Management Review*, *Journal of Operations Management*, *Omega*, *Interfaces*, *International Journal of Production and Operations Management*, *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, and others. She has written chapters for books and encyclopedias and is co-author of the book *Operations Management*, in its 2nd edition. Her research interests include judgmental forecasting, combination forecasting, demand management, supply chain management, and the role of information technology in forecasting. Dr. Sanders serves on the Editorial Review Boards of the *Decision Sciences Journal* and *Journal of Operations Management*. She is also Associate Editor of *Foresight*, a journal of the International Institute of Forecasters. Dr. Sanders is an active member of the International Institute of Forecasting (IIF), Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (formerly CLM), Production and Operations Management Society (POMS), and the Decision Sciences Institute (DSI), where she is currently serving on the Board of Directors and Executive Board. Dr. Sanders also has extensive business experience in the areas of business forecasting and supply chain management, and has worked with firms such as ATT, Bank One, MTC Corporation, CIBA Corning, and the Schottenstein Corporation.

IIF Board of Directors Statement of Activity

I am currently the Associate Editor of *Foresight* and work closely with the Editor, Len Tashman, on every aspect of the journal. I believe that *Foresight* is an important venture for IIF. The success of *Foresight* is imperative and these initial years are critical in terms of growing the journal market and refining journal features. As such I see my primary activity on the IIF Board as Associate Editor. There is a great deal of activity associated with this. It involves identifying high-quality authors and reviewers, and will require me to often attend the semi-annual Forecasting Summit in search of potential contributors. I am often involved in managing the review process, performing initial editing, conducting reviews, and many similar activities. Further, we are actively refining journal features and its promotion at academic and business institutions. Growing this market is essential in these initial years and I see my primary role as helping to ensure that this success takes place.



Forecasting Events

The Institute of Business Forecasting's Supply Chain Forecasting Conference (February 27-28, 2006 in Phoenix, AZ) will feature a workshop on "Lean and Practical Approaches to Forecasting." The workshop is presented by Niek Lagerwey, Director of Lean Supply Chain at Sara Lee Branded Apparel, and Michael Gilliland, Marketing Manager at SAS Institute. For conference details see www.ibf.org.

The fourth annual Consumer Products and Retail Forecasting Forum will be held on April 26 in Las Vegas, in conjunction with the IBF Best Practices Conference. For event details see www.ibf.org.

International Symposium on Forecasting (ISF) will be held in Santandar, Spain from June 11 – 14 2006. For more details see page 9.

14th International Symposium on Inventories – Call for Papers



CALL FOR PAPERS

**14th International Symposium
on Inventories**
August 21-25, 2006
Budapest, Hungary

Special session

DEMAND FORECASTING FOR INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Many inventory systems cater for uncertain demand. The inventory parameters in these systems require estimates of the demand and forecast error distributions. The two stages of these systems, forecasting and stock control, are often examined independently. Most studies tend to look at demand forecasting as if this were an end in itself, or at stock control models as if there were no preceding stages of computation. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the interaction between demand forecasting and inventory control, since the performance of the inventory system is not only determined by the two components separately.

We are organising a special session on demand forecasting for inventory management in the forthcoming 14th International Symposium on Inventories, August 2006, and we would like to invite theoretical and/or empirical contributions that consider this interface. If you wish to present a paper in this special session, please send us an extended abstract (400-500 words) before **March 15, 2006**. Decisions regarding acceptance will be made (in consultation with the ISIR executive committee) by **April 30, 2006**. Abstracts can be submitted as an attachment via e-mail to either Aris Syntetos or John Boylan (see details below), copying also to ISIR (info@isir.hu). We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Professor John E. Boylan

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tel. no: + 44 (0) 161 295 58 04



The 26th International Symposium on Forecasting

FORECASTING CHALLENGES IN A CHANGING WORLD ENVIRONMENT

Please join us for this event, sponsored by The International Institute of Forecasters. We plan to focus on new developments in forecasting and to encourage discussion of challenges and issues by participants from a wide range of fields.

- This year's event will be located on the historic peninsula of Santandar, on Spain's northern coast, from June 11 – 14, 2006.
- The symposium will offer both a challenging and stimulating program, including keynote and featured speakers at the forefront of forecasting research and development.

http://www.isf2006.org/keynote_feature_speakers.php

- Numerous workshops will be available focusing on various forecasting methods, including Bayesian Models and Applied Time Series Analysis.
- There will be many opportunities for touring the area, experiencing the fine cuisine of Spain and interacting with your peers.

To Register or find out more, contact us at:

- <http://www.isf2006.org/>
- Pam Stroud, IIF Business Manager, pstroud@comcast.net

We look forward to seeing you in Spain!

Lars-Erik Oller – President ISF,
Antonio Garcia-Ferrer - General Chair - antonio.garcia@uam.es



The International Institute of Forecasters Certificate of Forecasting Practice

The International Institute of Forecasters (IIF) is launching a certification program. The IIF invites potential course providers to submit appropriate courses for evaluation by the IIF; a successful validation will allow the course provider to be awarded an IIF Certificate of Forecasting Practice on successful completion of the course.

- The course should consist of approximately 200 study hours (total student time commitment).
- The provider of the certificate should pay the IIF a fee (\$200) for each person registering for the certificate.
- The provider should describe the entry standards into the proposed certificate course.
- Assessment may be through a variety of mechanisms and need not necessarily depend on formal examination.

- The course must cover the following topics:

TOPIC

Introductory data collection & analysis
Basic Statistics
The Organisation and Management of Forecasting
Forecasting the economy and its impact on the firm
Extrapolation methods
Introductory econometrics
Judgemental approaches
Choosing between forecasting methods; combining

- An illustrative list of topics that could be included in a certificate follows:

TOPIC

Introductory marketing and economics
Scenario forecasting
Advanced time series
Advanced econometrics
Financial forecasting
New product forecasting
Market research (qualitative)
Qualitative forecasting methods
Information systems and data bases
Macroeconomic Forecasting

- Teaching of the material may include a variety of delivery modes and should include project work and case studies.

think forecasting potential.

In order to gain IIF Certification, course providers should send full course details to:
P. Geoffrey Allen
Secretary-Treasurer of the IIF
Department of Resource Economics
University of Massachusetts
80 Campus Center Way
Amherst, MA 01003-9246 USA
Phone: +1 (413) 545-5715
Fax: +1 (413) 545-5853
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Thinking well is what you do.

FORESIGHT

The International Journal of Applied Forecasting



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Email Bill Wicker, Managing Editor, at billwicker@adelphia.net

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A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FORECASTERS



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