



Spotlight on Chance News

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Chance News (http://chance.dartmouth.edu/chancewiki/index.php/Main_Page) is “a newsletter that reviews articles in the news that use probability or statistical concepts (*chance news*). It is aimed at helping the general public better understand current chance news and assisting teachers of probability and statistics who want to liven up their courses by using current chance news.” From 1992 to 2004, a newsletter was prepared by J. Laurie Snell with help from various other people (Bill Peterson, Fuxing Hou, Joan Snell, just to name a few).

A newsletter begins with quotes and “Forsooth” items. Forsooth items are statements from the media in which an intelligent *Statistics* reader would doubt. For example, from the December 10, 1998 to January 20, 1999 issue, “The Centre for the Study of Higher Education (University of Melbourne) has sought Macquarie's support to survey a representative sample of their academic staff. Interested members of staff should contact Professor XXXXXX (x #####) about obtaining copies of the survey questionnaire.” Staff News (Macquarie University) 13 November 1998.

Older newsletter contained information about the *Chance* website – the addition of videos and various other materials. But most of a newsletter contains wonderful summaries of media articles, discussion questions and maybe further reading suggestions. Each year, at least one “Ask Marilyn” article from Parade Magazine seems to make it in one of the newsletters.

Starting with the May 2005 issue, Chance News got a different look. It went “wiki”! Although most people may be familiar with *Wikipedia*, we may not realize exactly what “wiki” is. From the *Wiki.org* site, “Wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser Wiki is unusual among group communication mechanisms in that it allows the

organization of contributions to be edited in addition to the content itself. . . Allowing everyday users to create and edit any page in a Web site is exciting in that it encourages democratic use of the Web and promotes content composition by non-technical users.”

As a result of “going wiki”, a person, who has login privileges, can add to or edit Chance News. On the main page, it is clear how to obtain login privileges. So if it has been awhile since you read Chance News or maybe you never have, now is a great time to visit a wonderful site. Maybe you could even submit a quote, forsooth, or a media article summary with discussion questions. Regardless of whether you submit anything or not, I hope that you find some good articles to bring into your classroom.

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