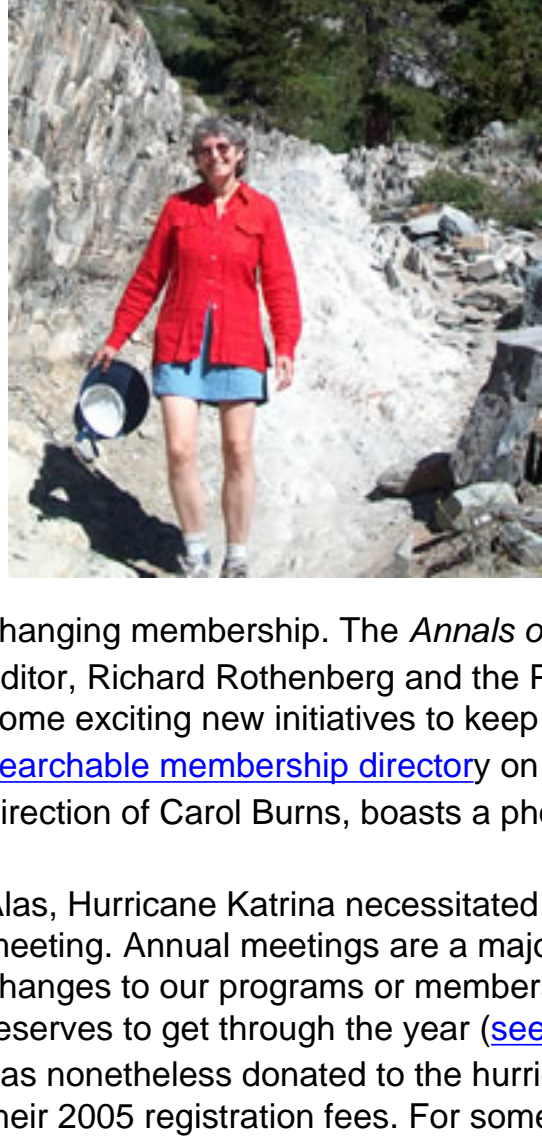




President's Letter



Life sure can change quickly. Until a few weeks before the planned 2005 ACE meeting, there was nothing but good news to report to ACE members in my first presidential column. Some highlights: ACE is changing! Members are younger, and more likely to be female, and more racially and ethnically diverse than in the past. Our new category of qualified master's level epidemiologist is growing and we have our first Associate Member Representative to the Board of Directors, Jennifer Fergenbaum ([see article](#)). We have established a Task Force on Mentoring, chaired by past-president Martha Linet, to help identify ways to better serve our

Calendar of Events

- February 3, 2006
Abstract submission deadline ([Congress](#))
- February 17, 2006
Student paper deadline ([Congress](#))
- June 21-24, 2006
[2006 Congress of Epidemiology](#)

changing membership. The *Annals of Epidemiology* is doing very well ([see report from Elsevier](#)) and our editor, Richard Rothenberg and the Publications Committee, chaired by Melissa Bondy, are putting forth some exciting new initiatives to keep up the momentum ([see article](#)). We now have an electronic, [searchable membership directory](#) on our website and the newsletter, which has blossomed under the direction of Carol Burns, boasts a photo editor, Richard Kwok.

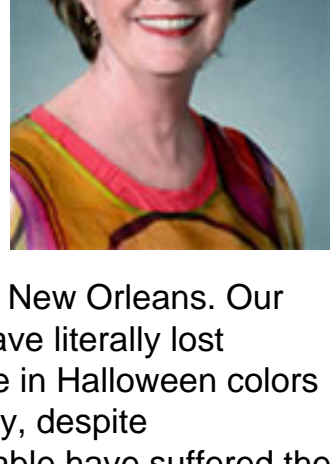
Alas, Hurricane Katrina necessitated a rapid re-assessment. We were forced to cancel our New Orleans meeting. Annual meetings are a major source of College revenue. Whereas we anticipate no major changes to our programs or membership dues, this cancellation will require us to use some of our reserves to get through the year ([see article](#) by ACE Treasurer, Jim Collins). I am proud that the College has nonetheless donated to the hurricane relief effort and that many of our members similarly donated their 2005 registration fees. For some insight into what our colleagues and fellow citizens faced in New Orleans, see the accompanying [article](#) by Terry Fontham, the 2005 ACE local host.

Top Stories

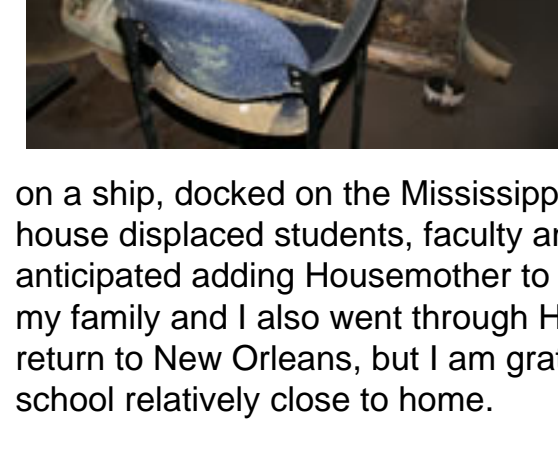
New Orleans Notes

Terry Fontham

As local host for this year's ACE meeting in New Orleans, I couldn't wait to welcome you to our city. The planned program was outstanding and New Orleans a delightful venue for combining work and pleasure. What a nice job to have! As we all know that's now history, but I sincerely hope that the work of the program committee will be offered in the near future in some appropriate venue. I also hope, undoubtedly optimistically, that the rebuilt New Orleans retains our unique culture and charm while addressing the myriad of problems that have long plagued our city, resulting in poor health, grossly inadequate education and staggering poverty.



I left New Orleans on August 27 and, as I write this on October 7, I have not yet returned to the city. On a personal note, my family and I are fine. We were able to evacuate and are fortunate to live along the relatively high rim of the bowl that is New Orleans. Our home can be repaired. I have more friends and colleagues than I can count who have literally lost everything. What the water and wind didn't destroy, the mold – growing everywhere in Halloween colors – has ruined. Repairing is not an option. The courage and determination of so many, despite unimaginable losses, is truly remarkable. As is often the case, the poor and vulnerable have suffered the most.

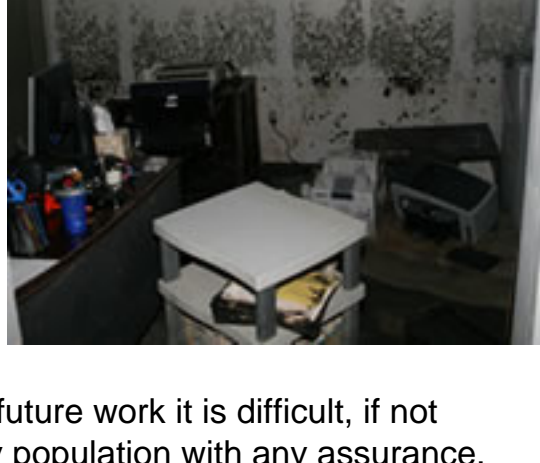


Our School of Public Health and the buildings occupied by the other five Schools in the Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Sciences Center had basements and/or first floors flooded. All are currently uninhabitable. Tulane Medical Center was likewise affected. Hindsight is a font of wisdom. I can give you a very long list of things not to store on the ground floor. Our university leadership elected to temporarily relocate to Baton Rouge where the main campus of the LSU system is located. With a remarkable effort all six schools were able to re-establish their teaching programs in one month's time. Tomorrow I will move into a cabin

on a ship, docked on the Mississippi River here in Baton Rouge, which has been secured to temporarily relocate students, faculty and staff. That will no doubt be an interesting experience! I never anticipated adding Housemother to my resume. Avoiding the long commute from Lafayette LA (where my family and I also went through Hurricane Rita) to Baton Rouge will be a welcome change. I long to return to New Orleans, but I am grateful for the opportunity that we've had to work and rebuild our school relatively close to home.

I had the chance to read an excellent Op-Ed piece written by our ACE Board of Directors after cancellation of the annual meeting. I hope that by the time you read my letter, the editorial is in print and you've had the opportunity to read it as well. The article highlights one of the pillars of epidemiology – counting – and the need to do it now if we are ever to evaluate the impact of Hurricane Katrina and learn from the experience. That will indeed be a challenge. Today as I write, only one of eleven hospitals in the city is open. A few suburban hospitals are open with a limited number of beds. The Office of Public Health (OPH) is in temporary offices in Baton Rouge. The CDC, working with OPH, is monitoring all medical facilities and recording the number of injuries, diagnoses of diarrhea, skin infections and flu. It is not clear, however, what monitoring of "all medical facilities" represents. Challenges to our infrastructure that I couldn't have conceived of last summer now exist, particularly in communication.

Our population recorded in the census is now scattered around the country with family and friends or in shelters. At this point we don't accurately know where people are, who they are, whether they will return to the New Orleans region, health status pre and post Katrina, vital status since Katrina and so forth. FEMA reportedly has information on those who have registered with them, but the accuracy of that database is unknown, as is our ability to access the data. It is unlikely that the demographics of New Orleans will mirror that of pre-Katrina. How our population will change is impossible to determine at this point – size, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, are all question marks. For population scientists that is unnerving. Many of us are concerned that we will not be able to address the specific aims we originally proposed in our on-going research projects. In grant proposals we are writing for future work it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate sample size and describe our projected study population with any assurance.



Agencies and researchers are interested in acute and long term health effects of this disaster and hope to answer questions such as the effect of exposure to mold in healthy and vulnerable populations, the physical and emotional impact in first responders and health care providers, along with many other questions about those who evacuated and those who stayed. With funding and infrastructure we can begin. However, pre-existing health problems, and there were many, have not been cured by this disaster. There is a danger that as we address immediate needs and seek to learn from this unprecedented disaster, attention and resources will be diverted from omnipresent issues such as late stage diagnoses, limited access, disparities across ethnic groups, and high incidence and mortality rates for all chronic diseases of importance which have consistently led to our annual state ranking of 49th or 50th in age adjusted mortality. It is incumbent upon those of us who return to New Orleans to avoid the mistakes of the past as we rebuild. This will no doubt be a challenge but it is also a remarkable opportunity.

In closing, I want to thank my many friends in this organization who have offered assistance and encouragement on a daily basis. I am and always will be grateful.

ACE's Response to Katrina

Martha Linet, past-ACE President

Among the many losses from Hurricane Katrina, cancellation of the ACE 2005 Annual Scientific Meeting cannot compare with the enormity of loss of lives, jobs, homes, communities, research and datasets, and other tangible and intangible valuables. The ACE Board of Directors discussed Katrina at length during the September 17-18 Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting, held in Chicago. Led by Vickie Mays and Betsy Foxman, members of the BOD prepared a commentary on the need for careful, quantitative baseline assessment of the many types of losses as well as the need for follow-up, which will be submitted to the *Annals of Epidemiology*. The ACE Executive Committee, supported by the BOD, voted to donate \$5,000 on behalf of ACE to America's Second Harvest to help the victims of Katrina. Several advance registrants for the ACE 2005 Annual Scientific Meeting requested that their registration fees be donated to hurricane relief. ACE members of the North American Epidemiology Congress 2006 Organizing Committee have also supported the need to continue focusing on long-term losses from Katrina by supporting inclusion of a symposium on this topic at the June 2006 Meeting.

Health of the Annals

Pat Hogan, Publisher, US Health Sciences Journal

In 2006, the ACE's official Journal, *Annals of Epidemiology* will publish monthly. The additional two issues will provide 160 more pages each year to publish papers accepted by the Journal, accommodating the increased number of submissions resulting from the introduction of EES, the Journal's electronic submission system. EES has also decreased the time from submission to acceptance to publication of articles.

The Journal's impact factor continues to rise. According to the 2004 *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR) published by Thomson Scientific, *Annals of Epidemiology* had an impact factor of 2.353, up from 2.345 in 2003. The total cites for *Annals of Epidemiology* in 2004 were 2,443 with 103 papers published. The Journal has an impressive cited half-life of 7.0. The cited half-life for the Journal is the median age of its articles cited in the current JCR year. Half of the citations to the Journal are to articles published with the cited half-life. *Annals of Epidemiology* ranked 19th out of 93 publications in the Public, Environmental and Occupational Health category.

Elsevier, the Journal's publisher, continues to market *Annals of Epidemiology* through direct mail, catalog, renewal promotions, telemarketing, agency subscriptions, space advertising and exhibits at major conventions and meetings in the field.

The great majority of subscribers are from North America (86%), followed by Europe (8%) and Asia (4%). However, two-thirds of institutional subscribers are from overseas, demonstrating the Journal's wide appeal.

Annals of Epidemiology is seeing robust growth in electronic subscriptions, both through ScienceDirect, its institutional portal and through [www.annalsofepidemiology.org](#) through which members and individual subscribers can access the Journal. Both electronic platforms provide full text of current and archived issues, general Journal information, customized advanced search engines, fast-track publication of key articles online prior to their appearance in print, online-only publication of selected material such as extensive research data, video, images, etc, links to MEDLINE, and email alerts as new material is posted. The electronic *Annals of Epidemiology* also offers pay-per-view and subscription purchase features for non-subscribers who may wish to access only selected articles, links to other articles by the same author, links to other articles that cite the article being read and links to submission information.

The Journal looks forward to continued success and growth in the coming year with the support of ACE and under the able leadership of ACE's publication committee, Dr. Richard Rothenberg, Editor, the Associate Editors, the members of the Editorial Board, and Managing Editor, Dorothy Fitzmaurice.

We urge all members of ACE to submit their papers to *Annals of Epidemiology*, and encourage members to become involved with the Journal as reviewers. We welcome recommendations of potential topics and authors and other suggestions regarding the Journal.

In the News

Finances of the College

Jim Collins, ACE Treasurer



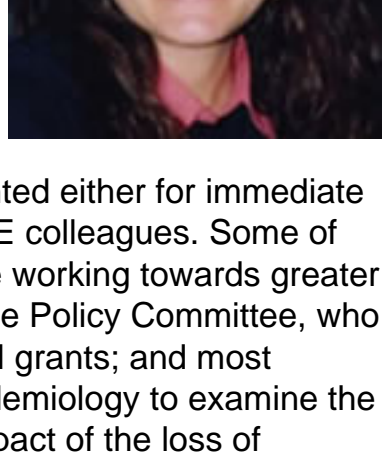
The annual meeting is an important source of revenue for the College. When we have well-attended meetings and are able to secure grant support, the College usually runs a surplus for the year. Four of the five past annual meetings generated a surplus. These revenues have enabled the College to add several new programs, improve the web site, and keep membership dues flat even as our journal costs have increased. The College for the first time in many years is financially stable. Thus, even though we had to cancel the 2005 meeting, we anticipate no major changes to our programs or membership dues. However, this cancellation will result in a substantial loss of revenue for the College and will require us to use some of our reserves to get through the year. While it will still be a tough year, we can weather this storm together and will work to rebuild our reserves.

From the Board of Directors

A Warm Welcome From Your Associate Member!

Jennifer Fergenbaum, Associate Member Representative

It is my pleasure to welcome Associate Members of the College to what I think will be an energetic and productive year! As your Associate Director, I will provide you with timely information about the activities of the College, inform you of educational and professional activities within and outside of the College, and help plan conference workshops and social activities for us.



I was delighted to attend the BOD meeting in Chicago, IL as the first Associate Member Representative. The BOD meeting was fast paced, highly efficient and included a packed agenda. I witnessed the passing of the "torch" from past-president, Dr. Martha Linet, to newly elected president, Dr. Betsy Foxman. Activity updates were given from all Committee Chairs, either in person or by teleconference. From each Chair, a number of topics were presented either for immediate vote, or to be discussed. It was very impressive to listen and learn from my ACE colleagues. Some of the issues presented included topics from the Publications Committee, who are working towards greater journal exposure and a move to potentially include more provocative papers; the Policy Committee, who lead a debate on NIH's plan to recognize multiple principal investigators on NIH grants; and most notably, the Minority Affairs Committee, who stressed the important role of epidemiology to examine the short-term and long-term health effects among survivors of Katrina, and the impact of the loss of epidemiological data in New Orleans. The Board also highlighted the need to attract and appropriately recognize significant contributions by epidemiologists who hold a Master's degree, a joint role of the Admissions and Membership Committees. With a clear agenda over the two days, both Martha and Betsy were sharp to synthesize the points of discussion and resolve some issues. The BOD voted on some action items, whereas additional discussion by individual committees will be needed for evolving issues.

I enthusiastically encourage Associate Members to get involved by joining a committee, attending scientific meetings, networking with your colleagues of ACE, or attending social events with your peers. There is a vast resource of knowledge and expertise among ACE members, which could only contribute to your personal and professional growth. We welcome your ideas, your participation, and your questions or concerns!



The Passing of the Presidential Gavel

The passing of the presidential gavel was officially performed on September 18, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago, Illinois. This ceremony commemorated the completion of Martha Linet's term as ACE President and welcomed Betsy Foxman as acting President for 2005-2006.

Committees

Publications

Update on the Annals of Epidemiology

Richard Rothenberg, Editor, Annals of Epidemiology

The *Annals of Epidemiology* is now 15 years old—the current Editorial Group has been in place for the last 5 years—and has begun to display some telltale stigmata of maturation. For example:



- Stabilization of turn-around time at about 10 weeks for accepted articles, and less than 4 weeks for articles rejected without peer review.
- A current submission rate of about 270-300 papers per year, 40-50% accepted.
- The establishment of a website (<http://www.annalsofepidemiology.org/inpress>) for immediate web publication of accepted manuscripts. These articles are indexed and may be cited, though the actual print copy will appear later.
- The establishment of an online system for submission and review of manuscripts (okay, just like everyone else, but at least we have it too).
- A section devoted to the ideas and activities of the American College of Epidemiology, with special emphasis on events and policy issues of interest to epidemiologists (see below).
- A move from 10 to 12 issues per year, beginning in January 2006.

But content is more important than logistics. Thanks to our contributors, the current content of the *Annals* is diverse. In the past few years, we have developed a strong base in standard epidemiologic subjects and methods, but have also published articles as diverse as narghile smoking by women in Syria to the use of neural networks as an analytic tool. In the coming years, however, there are several areas that we wish to emphasize, and that we hope the membership of the College will embrace as well.

1. Alternative methods
The epidemiologic armamentarium is well established, but there is much to be learned from other fields and other approaches. The *Annals* will welcome papers that use methods that are new to epidemiology, and that provide insight into the way other disciplines approach the analysis of data. Though the technical base for epidemiology remains firm, and continues to evolve, practitioners will be well served by a broadening of their understanding of alternative approaches.
2. Policy issues
Epidemiology is, by its nature, of the world, and we welcome policy discussions (original articles, commentary, brief notes) that deal with the pressing social and political issues of our day. Most relevant are those for which the use, analysis, and interpretation of population-based data are critical. In coming issues, we will be publishing comments, letters, and deliberations of the Policy Committee of the College, as well as material from other ACE groups and committees that will be of interest to the readership.
3. Editorial review and commentary
We welcome short, focused, and potentially controversial discussions of current topics in epidemiology. Such contributions may be hybrids: a summary of status coupled with the views and hypotheses of the author(s). The goal is to provide a forum for fact-based opinion (rather than the reverse, which is the reigning motif in current public discourse). Contributors should use a freer format than that usually imposed on original articles, and seek to be insightful, trenchant, and pithy (no lisp, please). Please consult the *Annals'* Instructions for Authors for details.

Finally, we thank the membership of ACE for its contributions to the *Annals*. We will shortly be repeating a brief survey, first conducted 5 years ago, seeking the interests and availability of ACE members who wish to serve as reviewers.

Commentary

Natural disasters can bring out the worst and best in society and our leaders. The healthy financial status of the College, in the absence of an annual meeting, is due to the responsibility and outstanding leadership of our past and current leaders. Thank you! Let's now look forward to 2006 and participating in the [Epidemiology Congress](#). Carol Burns, Editor ([cburns@dow.com](#)).

ACE News is published by the American College of Epidemiology

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