



The Newsletter of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research -- Fall 2007

Is It Fall Already?

Must Be Time For The MAPOR Conference

By David Tewksbury

MAPOR President

Only a little over a month remains until our annual conference in Chicago. The program looks exciting, and I know we will all enjoy another opportunity to talk with friends and colleagues, stroll the Magnificent Mile, and wait for Mickey Mouse to launch the official holiday shopping season. OK, well maybe not Mickey so much.

Prior to this year's conference, I want to take a few minutes to relay some news about recent events that affect MAPOR.

During the business meeting at the 2006 conference, the membership discussed the possibility of incorporating MAPOR. People were supportive of the move, so the executive board continued discussing the issue over the winter. We considered the costs and benefits and ultimately decided to incorporate.

To recap, the central office of AAPOR approached all of the regional chapters with a proposal designed to encourage incorporation. Proponents of incorporation argued quite accurately, I think, that MAPOR and its leadership have been a bit vulnerable on a few points.

The most important issue is that of insurance. Becoming incorporated and picking up liability insurance will protect members of the executive board from lawsuits

related to our activities. AAPOR is carrying the base policy for all of the incorporated chapters (this protects AAPOR, of course) and our insurance is a rider on their policy. This allows MAPOR to carry insurance at a relatively low annual cost. To facilitate incorporation, AAPOR picked up the legal costs for the filing process.

Being incorporated will require MAPOR to file annual corporate tax returns, but our association's income is relatively straight forward and modest. So, we do not believe this will present our secretary/treasurer with a substantial burden. In recognition of our long-standing roots in Chicago, we incorporated in Illinois and John Loft, our conference chair this year, agreed to be the registered agent for the organization. Were John to move out of Illinois, we would need to transfer that title to another MAPOR member.

This year has also seen changes to the AAPOR web site; those changes affect us to a small degree. Members of the AAPOR leadership suggested to chapters that we might all want to bring our web sites under the national site. Ultimately, a number of chapters wanted to retain their sites, and so the new AAPOR site currently features a simple page for each chapter. Our page includes our putative motto (i.e., "Midwest... it's a state of mind"), a list of officers, and a link to our MAPOR site. Steve Everett

continues to manage the MAPOR site (www.mapor.org), where you will find past newsletters, a photographic archive of recent conferences, and current information about the organization.

I want to note that the leadership of AAPOR has been promoting a greater integration of the chapters with AAPOR in the last few years, at least more integration than I have noticed in the recent past. The encouragement to incorporate, the offer to host our web presence, and other smaller initiatives show that AAPOR continues to think of the chapters as important parts of the larger organization. For example, the national office recently announced that winners of chapter student paper competitions (such as our annual MAPOR Fellows competition) have an inside track to appearing on the AAPOR conference program.

I welcome these efforts by the AAPOR leadership while also recognizing that MAPOR is relatively unique among the chapters. Our conferences are more akin to meetings of a small national organization than might often be the case. In fact, our motto (there it is again) speaks directly to the national character of our organization. Still, we are, indeed, part of AAPOR, and I think we all appreciate our interactions with the larger association.

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Information Environment

Conference Theme Designed To Stimulate Research

By John Loft

Conference Chair

Thanks to the authors and presenters, the 2007 MAPOR conference will continue the tradition of thought provoking papers and presentations and lively discussion. The agenda for the conference includes 94 papers, 13 posters, and a panel session. In addition, conference attendees can look forward to comments of Robert Shapiro (Columbia University) as our Luncheon Keynote speaker and Timothy Johnson (University of Illinois – Chicago) leading the Pedagogy Hour.

The 2007 MAPOR conference

will be held once again the weekend before Thanksgiving (November 16 – 17) at the Radisson Hotel and Suites on E. Huron St. in Chicago. The hotel's location in the heart of the Magnificent Mile allows MAPOR attendees access to the finest shopping and dining district in the Midwest. The Magnificent Mile Lights Festival will take place on Michigan Avenue immediately following our conference. (A reminder: the parade makes it difficult to get a cab or to get to the trains to make a late flight out.)

The theme for this year's conference is "*Newspapers to YouTube: Audience-Media Interaction in a New Information Environment.*" The Board's intention in establishing

this theme was to stimulate research about the consequences of new communication options on opinion formation and exchange. I am excited about the realization of this intention. Presenters in several sessions will offer their insights into the role that internet and other media play in political communication, public opinion, and behavior. Sessions will also consider several methodological topics in survey design, instrumentation, telephone surveys, and surveys on health topics.

MAPOR welcomes Robert Shapiro back to the Midwest as our Luncheon Keynote Speaker on Friday, presenting on *Ideology, Partisanship, and More About the U.S. Army*. The luncheon will also feature the announcement of the MAPOR Fellows' Student Paper winners. Friday afternoon, Timothy Johnson will lead a discussion on *Culture and Survey Behavior* during Pedagogy Hour.

Saturday's panel discussion on *Beneath and Beyond Perceptions: Perspectives on the Third-Person Effect* will feature MAPOR experts Richard Perloff (Cleveland State University), Julie Andsager (The University of Iowa), H. Allen White (The Everett Group), Albert Gunther (University of Wisconsin), David Tewksbury (University of Illinois), and Hye-Jin Paek (University of Georgia) and promises to be an informative discussion.

In the attached preliminary program you will find all the sessions and papers listed. So please, register for the conference and don't forget to register for the luncheon. The conference is held at the Radisson Hotel & Suites in downtown Chicago <http://www.radisson.com/chicagoil>.

President's Column . . .

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Looking ahead to November, the conference is shaping up nicely. The conference organizers have scheduled the usual popular events, such as the pedagogy hour and the poster session and social hour and a quarter on Friday afternoon. I encourage everyone at the conference to attend these and other events we have planned.

MAPOR owes thanks to many people who have kept the wheels of the organization moving over the past 11 months. Perhaps first among these is H. Allen White, our secretary/treasurer, who has kept us on task and efficient while maintaining his usual dry, good humor. I also wish to thank all of the other members of the executive board, particularly conference chair

John Loft, for their work on the conference. This is our big event of the year, and the efforts of Weiwu Zhang, Ward Kay, Dietram Scheufele, Dominique Brossard, Robert Belli, Joe Murphy, and Chip Eveland will soon pay off.

Finally, I am pleased to thank Steve Everett for his work on the MAPOR site and, more importantly, for his work with the sponsors of our conference. MAPOR enjoys an exceptional level of support from its conference sponsors.

They help us keep our membership costs down and keep our annual meeting accessible to graduate students. Steve has made it his personal job to maintain contact with our sponsors over the years. We are grateful to him and to our sponsors for helping to ensure the continued success of MAPOR.