

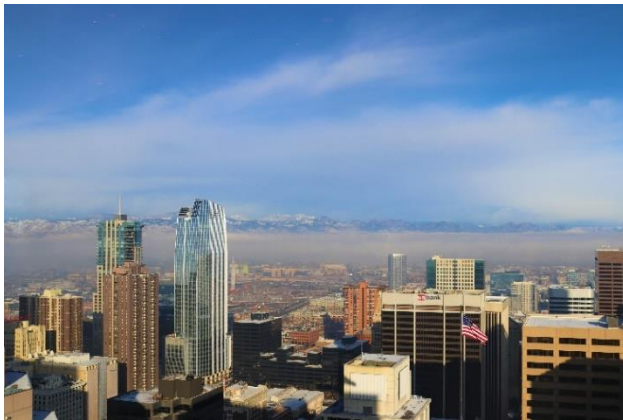


## DAAG 2019 - Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Jordan Stephens

The largest group in DAAG history “descended” on Denver in early March to celebrate the event’s 25th year and explore the future, including the implications of data. The conference was preceded by two days of workshops on applying decision concepts in a variety of situations. One workshop allowed participants to dip their toes into data science, “coding” in R to inform a probability.

Backed by the skyline and Rocky Mountains, the conference then officially opened Thursday with reflections on the genesis of DAAG by Ellen Coopersmith, John Palmer, David Skinner, and Tom Stradlin, who have been involved since the beginning. The conference then turned to its “Data + Decisions” theme with a provocative keynote by Cassie Kozyrkov, Chief Data Scientist at Google, on “AI is decision-making at scale.” She asserted, among other things, that AI is an amplifier of decision-making – good and bad.



She was followed by a full slate of panels on the intersection of data and decisions, along with a lunch keynote by Thomas Seyller, head of Google Cloud Pricing. Michael Norton of Harvard Business School closed the day with a keynote on the “love and hate” relationship between humans and technology, including how our feelings differ depending on how AI is presented.

The Denver skyline and Rocky Mountains provide an appealing backdrop to DAAG.

*Continued on page 2*

### In this issue

DAAG 2019 in review	1	Chapter news	8
Upcoming events	3	Sponsor’s message	10
Member spotlight	4	Brain teaser	11
Ask the Fellows	5	Useful links	11
Council Focus	7		

During dinner at the Adams Mystery Playhouse, members were recognized for their contributions: Recruiter award to Andrew Thrift and Basil Strumborg, Volunteer award to Tim Nieman, and Pioneer award to Ron Howard and Jim Matheson. Jim shared thoughts about the early days of decision analysis, including work on the “Mars project,” which was later cited by the “detective” as an alibi after Jim became a suspect in the interactive murder mystery.

After a Friday morning of tracks exploring “data + decisions” in life science, energy, and high tech, the conference reunited to recognize the winners of the Decision Analysis Practice Award (sponsored jointly with the Decision Analysis Society of INFORMS). Gilberto Montibeller shared his team’s work on the supply of malaria diagnostic kits.

SDP President Jim Driscoll introduced China Telecom as winners of the Raiffa-Howard Award. A company video highlighted their scale and the value DQ has created, and Wang Hongmei, General Manager of the Department of Development Strategy, accepted the award on her company’s behalf. In a touching moment, Jim then recognized Hilda Cherekdjian for all of her work for SDP and announced a personal donation by several board members to support her outside volunteer work. DAAG 2019 closed with talks exploring two extremes –probability distributions and DA/DQ/DS with teens – and a variety of DA/DQ case studies.

This year’s DAAG was the first for many; at the opening reception, at least half indicated they were new. One first-timer reported being impressed with the mix of participants, from long-time practitioners to newbies, and the willingness of all to share. Others expressed how much they look forward to attending again. With thanks to Somik Raha, Jon Mauer, and the program committee for a great DAAG 2019, long-time attendees and new friends alike look forward to next year in Houston.



DAAG 2019 participants focus intently on their session.



SDP President Jim Driscoll presents to Raiffa-Howard Award to Wang Hongmei of China Telecom.

## Upcoming Events

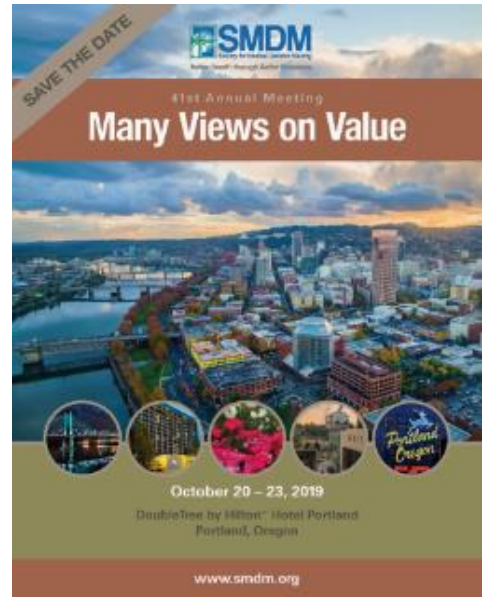


**Decision Quality Energy Summit**  
April 12 , 2019  
Norris Conference Center  
816 Town and Country Boulevard  
Houston, TX, 77024, US

### Save the Date!

[SMDM 41st Annual Meeting](#): Portland, OR  
October 20 - 23, 2019  
The meeting theme is *Many Views on Value*.

Meeting co-chairs: Karen Eden, PhD, Carmen Lewis, MD, MPH and Dan Matlock, MD



Do you know of upcoming professional events that might be of interest to other SDP members? If so, please email the SDP newsletter at [newsletter@decisionprofessionals.com](mailto:newsletter@decisionprofessionals.com)

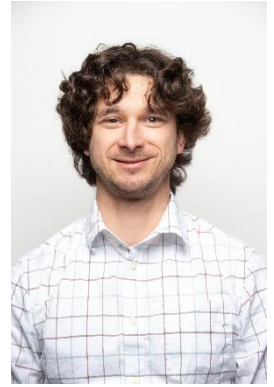




## Spotlight on SDP Member Jonathan Cummings

*In every issue of this newsletter, we turn the spotlight on a randomly-selected member of the SDP to learn more about that member's life as a decision professional.*

*The editors*



Back when he was a high school student, SDP member Jonathan Cummings discovered that he loved the study of biology. So, as an undergraduate at Oberlin College, he majored in biology and environmental studies and then went on to earn a master's degree with a focus on risk analysis from the Fisheries Management Program at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Later, while earning a PhD from the University of Vermont, he served as a teaching assistant for decision analysis courses at the National Conservation Training Center of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

After finishing his PhD, Jonathan worked for three years in a post-doc position at the US Geological Survey. About a year ago, he took a post-doc position at the School of Marine Science and Technology at the University of Massachusetts. There, he serves as a quantitative ecologist and decision analyst working on a program to develop more robust policies of sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change. Among his diverse responsibilities are working with fishermen to develop a clear statement of objectives, developing techniques of visualization of the tradeoffs inherent in fisheries management, and doing a literature review of fisheries management strategies. The ultimate goal is to help the New England Fishery Management Council make good decisions.

A significant satisfaction that Jonathan has experienced in his brief career as a decision professional came during his time at the US Geological Survey. He joined four other decision professionals there to write a paper on five very different ways of framing decisions regarding endangered species. The paper, which was published in the journal *Conservation Biology*\*, has been very well received.

A particularly tough challenge that Jonathan has faced as a decision professional is getting public sector decision makers to recognize and understand the assistance that the profession offers them.

He finds value in being a member of SDP through being reminded via the newsletter and webinars that he is part of a large and active community of decision professionals.

\*<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.13185>



### ***Dear SDP Fellows: “What advice do you have for young professionals entering the field of Decision Analysis?”***

*One of our fellows feels that with this sort of question, there needs to be follow up:*

I wouldn't presume I could advise young professionals about very much, but I might ask them a few questions:

- To work with decision makers, have you achieved a respectable level of expertise and experience in a relevant domain?
- Are you comfortable listening to conflicting stakeholder perspectives and asking the “so what” question?
- Do you have the confidence in your skills to take a group through “the mess”, not knowing where it may be going?
- Can you mentally rise above the weeds for a “mezzanine” view to see key patterns and strategic questions?
- Do you have the patience to enable groups to develop their own insights and make the decision that is right for them?
- Can you build the relationships with decision makers to help them actively engage and commit to action?

Another question that may be essential:

- Do you have a mentor and work partner(s) who see your potential to accomplish all of these with their coaching?

*Another of our fellows liked those questions, stating:*

Those questions are excellent for ascertaining whether this is a field you want to get into.

I guess the primary piece of advice I'd give is to put yourself into the decision maker's shoes as much as possible. I've seen so many people lose a client (internal or external) by assuming that said client would be happy to receive advice on how to go about making decisions. As we all know, this is rarely the case. We also often assume that we know the decision maker's motivations and objectives, when these are often more complex than we realize. Or we believe we see the best alternative for the client and try to steer the decision in that direction, without fully grasping their situation. Being a good decision professional entails really getting to understand perspectives other than your own. This is tricky, to say the least.

*Continues on page 6*

***If you have a question for the SDP Fellows about good practice among decision professionals, please send it to us at [SDP Newsletter: Ask The Fellows](#).***



*A third fellow took a more direct approach at answering the question, stating,*

My advice, although I am still learning lessons, would be:

1. Try to find a position in an Industry that interests you, and a position where you work with a **group of people** passionate about making good decisions. To explain:
  - a. Learning the ins and outs of a specific industry makes you more valuable to the company and you might as well be in an industry that you enjoy and are interested in or passionate about.
  - b. Instead of being the only DA in the company, start off in a group of professionals who are more experienced than you in decision making processes and DA techniques. This will benefit you in the long run. You will learn, listen, watch, and become a better DA.
2. I would take what Society of Decision Professionals and Decision Analysis Society have to offer seriously. They are smart, experienced, and supportive professionals as well as offering examples of great analysis, new techniques, pitfalls, lessons learned, and mentors. I also have found life-long friends in these organizations.
3. Be open-minded about what you call what you do. Internal consultant, Decision Analysis, Decision Professional, Analyst, Analytics professional, Numbers Geek, facilitator, forecaster, vendor, probability manager, statistician..... The title isn't important. Did you help them create value or not? – that's the question. If you did, they will be back.

*The following SDP Fellows contributed to answering this question: Gerald Bush, Patrick Leach, and Jack Kloeber.*

## SDP Council Focus

### Program Council:

The SDP Program Council has recently hosted great webinars with large attendance:

- December 2018: Rob Brown, Endeavor Management: “Which Part of Your Data Analytics Dollar is Wasted? - Decision Analysis as Guidance for Data Analysis”
- January 2019: Steve Glickman, Boeing: Decision Analysis Applications in Commercial Aerospace
- February 2019: SDG Sponsor webinar, Carl Spetzler and Jennifer Meyer: Accelerating the Journey to DQ with Distracted and Dispersed Teams

The Council has now nearly completed its work in planning and organizing DAAG through its Program, Logistics, and Marketing Committees. Hope you enjoyed the results in Denver!

For the future, we have selected Program Committee Co-Chairs and locations for DAAG 2020 and 2021:

- DAAG 2020: Houston – Pat Leach and Jay Andersen co-chairs
- DAAG 2021: Silver Spring, MD (tentative) – Elayne Ko and Charles Persinger co-chairs

## Welcome to New Co-editor Emilia Silebi

For the past two years Steve Tani and Matt Gorman have enjoyed a productive and rewarding collaboration in co-editing the SDP newsletter. We are pleased and excited to welcome Emilia Silebi of Kromite to replace Matt as co-editor. Matt and Emilia have worked together at Kromite since February 2016. Emilia is a member of SDP and is excited for this opportunity to continue bringing you news about SDP.

We continue to seek a motivated individual to replace Steve and work with Emilia. This would entail investing a few hours every three months contacting contributors, organizing content and conducting final review before publication. SDP Executive Director Hilda Cherekdjian will assist with the technical aspect of publishing. If you are interested in working with Emilia on a quarterly basis in the production of the Newsletter, please [click here](#) to email the editors.

Emilia Silebi, Matt Gorman and Steve Tani  
SDP Newsletter Editors



## Chapter News

### Houston Chapter

#### **Thriving in Uncertain Times**

*The Art & Science of Making Quality Decisions*

#### SDP Houston Energy Summit

April 12, 2019 | 7:00am – 6:00pm

Norris Conference Center, Houston, Texas

**Registration & Information: [www.dqenergysummit.com](http://www.dqenergysummit.com)**

*The Houston chapter of the Society of Decision Professionals has created an exciting one-day event dedicated to the critical importance of informed and insightful decision making against a backdrop of improving, but still uncertain conditions. A lineup of executives & internationally recognized decision professionals will lead discussions on how to optimize and not simply satisfy decision making across the energy sector. The summit is designed to share expertise and perspectives on decisions of corporate strategy to field development planning, major capital projects in oil & gas to alternative fuels and addressing carbon footprint.*

#### **Executive Panel Discussion:**

Speakers from across the industry--upstream, downstream, operators, service companies, consultants – will share their challenges and insights along the journey toward improving the ways decisions are made.

#### **Niall McCormack, BHP**

Vice President Exploration & Appraisal

#### **RUSSELL SMITH, BP**

VP Global Concept Developments - Global Projects

#### **STUART McGEOCH, SHELL**

Exploration Manager GOMX

#### **STEVE BROSS, CONOCOPHILLIPS**

VP Corporate Investment Evaluation

#### **KEITH HENDERSSON, CNOOC**

VP International Developments

#### **Summit Program:**

*Executive Perspective on the Implementation and Benefit of Decision Quality*

*The Role of Decision Quality in Deepwater Exploration, Appraisal and Production*

*Key Note Address from Dr. John Lienhard of the University of Houston*

*Unconventional Assets and the use of Decision Quality*

*Growing Alternative Energy Through Decision Quality*

*Networking Event*

#### **REGISTRATION: [www.dqenergysummit.com](http://www.dqenergysummit.com)**

Non SDP MEMBER | EARLY BIRD (Price increases on 3/22): \$300.00

SDP MEMBER | EARLY BIRD (Price increases on 3/22): \$250.00

STUDENT | \*Limited to 1st 20 Registrants : \$100.00





### San Francisco Chapter

The SDP-SF chapter met for the second time on February 21 in San Mateo with a webcast to San Ramon. At the meeting we had a lively discussion about various issues concerning the application of Cost and Schedule Risk (CSRA) that were revealed during the CSRA Interest group meetings that have been held since May 2018. Some of the issues related to what estimates should be assessed by subject matter experts and what distribution(s) to use. We also discussed multiple displays to present the results of the CSRA. This is all very consistent with the objectives of the SDP-SF Chapter to exchange information and to promote networking.

Also at the meeting, Mike Jerbic summarized the Factor Analysis of Information Risk (FAIR) standard for quantifying cyber risk, the non-profit FAIR Institute and the global standards organization The Open Group. Mike presented FAIR and the accompanying interest groups as being highly complementary to decision quality and that by working together these communities all can advance better cyber risk management decision quality. To that end, the next meeting of the SDP-SF Chapter will be a joint meeting with the FAIR Institute on April 23 in San Jose and will be webcast to San Mateo and San Ramon. The SDP-SF Chapter meetings are open to everyone. You do not need to be an SDP member to attend. If you are interested in joining the SDP-SF chapter, please send an email to Brian Putt ([Brian@ThePutts.com](mailto:Brian@ThePutts.com)).

### CSRA Interest Group

The Cost and Schedule Risk Analysis (CSRA) interest group has been conducting webinars since May 2018. We have walked through various aspects of a CSRA starting from the very beginning through to the analysis. A couple of very different Excel models were demonstrated and shared with the group.

At the next meeting we will discuss displays and presentation techniques for conveying the results. We will also discuss how the CSRA can be used to make decisions to minimize schedule and cost, and the inevitable trade-off between the two metrics. Videos of past meetings are available in the [SDP library](#).

The next meeting is not yet scheduled, but should you wish to participate in the CSRA interest group webinar please send an email to Brian Putt ([Brian@ThePutts.com](mailto:Brian@ThePutts.com)). If you have a CSRA model, analysis technique, or presentation technique, you are welcome to contribute to the CSRA interest group.

## A Word From SDP Sponsor Texas Executive Education

*In every issue of this newsletter, we include a message from one of the SDP sponsors, whose support contributes significantly to the on-going success of the Society.*



### Texas Executive Education

Texas Executive Education, at The University of Texas at Austin, provides solutions for the challenges and changes you face as both a business person and an individual. Whether you're adapting to changes in your business environment, or want to spur a change in your career, we work with you to establish your goals and then craft a plan to best help you achieve them. From two-day Open Enrollment classes to months-long Custom Programs, for small business start-ups to the largest companies in the world, we have the capability to scale your experience to best suit your needs. Backed by the extensive academic resources and faculty at The University of Texas at Austin, we develop curricula based on the real problems you are trying to solve and the concrete objectives you are aiming to accomplish.

We offer our classes in a high-impact, interactive learning environment, and our top-tier faculty deliver individualized solutions based on research and extensive real-world experience. Texas Executive Education has the full resources and capabilities of The University of Texas at Austin and also provides personal consulting from our knowledgeable core team of faculty and staff.

Highlights of our Open Enrollment portfolio include:

- Classes at Texas Executive Education offer powerful new perspectives while strengthening your individual leadership.
- Certificate programs which provide academic and intellectual rigor while fine tuning applicable real-world expertise through a focused series of classes.
- Top-tier UT-Austin professors, with real-world business savvy cultivated through years of proven experience in the corporate sphere.

Featured Certificate: Strategic Decision and Risk Management (SDRM) Certificate

The SDRM Certificate provides you with the techniques to recognize risks from your stakeholders' perspectives and innovatively generate better alternatives. The SDRM program is at the front edge of decision-making philosophy. The courses available in this program have been perfected and honed over the past decade and serve diverse areas of an organization, including finance, risk management, planning, engineering, marketing, R&D, IT, design, supply chain, business development and HR/talent development.

The SDRM courses offered by Texas Executive Education combine The University of Texas at Austin's academic and research depth with management consulting firm Strategic Decisions Group's 35 years of real-world experience in decision consulting and custom course development.

Learn more about the SDRM series as well as our entire portfolio of programs at [www.mcombs.utexas.edu/execed](http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/execed) or call 512-232-9462 for more information.

# Brain Teaser

## Congratulations to Scott McKean

There are actually two correct answers to the brain teaser posed in the December issue, requiring either seven or eight steps to get the grain in the silos configured as specified. A full explanation of the solutions can be found by [clicking here](#). Scott McKean was the first to submit one of the correct answers.

## THE MARCH BRAIN TEASER

*Instructions: You can win “bragging rights” by being the first to submit the correct answer of this brain teaser to the newsletter editors ([SDP Newsletter: Brain Teaser](#)). We will announce the winner in the next issue.*

## Who is John?

You meet two brothers, named John and Bill, but you do not know which is which. One of them always tells the truth while the other always lies. By hearing the answer to a single question asked of one of the brothers, it is possible to determine which one is John. The question contains only three words and is answerable by “yes” or “no”. What is the question?

## Useful Links

The SDP Board has posted the Society’s Bylaws and Policy and Procedure Manual, which can be found at: <http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/about/governance>

The SDP Knowledge Sharing Council maintains a Fellows Blog at:  
<http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/?scrollTo=blog-news#blog-news>

A listing of courses in decision analysis available to SDP members is at:  
<http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/courses/training-program>