RAW

Editorial Gibberings

This is a short issue mostly because of the need to get it out in time for the RSS Presidential Election . Also there was not a vast amount of material. Readers may or may not miss the chatty notes about upcoming conferences and events; if they do that is my fault for not being on the spot.

I should also explain that there were two other longish articles sent to me. One , on the research rat race(5 pages) which was a nicely written piece of introspection; the other on who makes decisions when statistical decision theory is actually applied. Both would have required retyping which was a sufficient reason by itself for not including them given the hurry to get the issue out. But, although I appreciate the point made by the editors of RS3 that people should feel free to "try out" their ideas "among friends", I am not sure that I would have included them given unlimited time. Censhorship raising it's ugly head?

Well , one practical reason is that, even retyped single space, they would have been, say, 10 sides which, over here, would have cost an extra 20 for printing and probably some more for postage. That's cheating firstly since I could have left out some of the material I have included and secondly it's not really me who should exercise financial censhorship but the whole collective. In any case I have passed the buck to the next b race of editors!

However, I was struck by the remark that Alison Macfarlane made when replying to the article by John Bibby on infant mortality in the last issue. She said that she thought it was an important "point of principle... that articles should be difficult to fault on a simple technical level as it appears that the newsletter gets read by outsiders as well as subscribers". Whilst I agree with Alison "in principle" (those, words again) , I don't think it is easy as that. Some of the readers think that technical criteria are ,at least in part, ideologically determined; I don't   but I think we have to be very careful how they are used

This brings me back to the articles. As examples of "trying out ideas among friends" , they were fine but much too long (if we accept cost constraints). With development,on the basis of comment by friends ?, they would have been good as a journal article. Is it worth us collectively thinking of launching , say, an annual series of papers, thus reserving the newsletter for news, comments, short reviews and flyers(which could develop into articles)? Anyway I though I would raise it since the present newsletter is hovering uneasily between a chat forum and an alternative publishing outlet for pieces which might be rejected elsewhere.

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Next Editors

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