BENFORD'S LAW BLUNDERS

An error in Feller's derivation of Benford's law (Feller 1971, p. 63) continues to be widely propagated, including several recent articles in *TAS*. Regularity and large spread of a probability distribution, or even large spread on a logarithmic scale, does *not* imply closeness to Benford. An article we submitted to *TAS* illuminating the persistent error was rejected based on a referee's report that our article concerned "things that are logically correct but completely miss the real-world point. . . ." But isn't the real-world point to train students to think clearly and logically about statistics?

A detailed explanation of those errors about Benford's law, with concrete inequalities and counterexamples using the ubiquitous uniform, exponential, and Pareto distributions, has now appeared in Berger and Hill (2011).

Theodore P. HILL
School of Mathematics
Georgia Institute of Technology

REFERENCES

Berger, A., and Hill, T. P. (2011), "Benford's Law Strikes Back: No Simple Explanation in Sight for Mathematical Gem," *The Mathematical Intelligencer*, 33 (1), 85–91. [141]

Feller, W. (1971), *An Introduction to Probability Theory and Its Applications*, Vol. 2 (2nd ed.), New York: Wiley. [141]

 DOI: 10.1198/tast.2011.10179