

NZSA President's Report (Jennifer Brown) AGM 2011

Welcome to the 2011 AGM.

This will be my last President's report and I want to take some time to reflect over the last three years. It is a privilege to be part of the NZ statistics community. Thank you for welcoming me to the team when I returned to NZ in 1996.

I will begin my report, as always, with mention of some very special people. Thank you to Richard Penny for his fine job as secretary. Richard in his subtle way reminding me of the next meeting, and what I should do was invaluable. Moving to video conferencing for executive meetings meant everyone could see the look of panic on your face when you realized you didn't have a paper copy of an agenda or last meetings minutes, but with Richard there we ran a smooth ship.

Thank you to Judi McWhirter who continues to do an amazing job with the finances. Thank you to Harold Henderson. Harold's role is far more than membership secretary and can tell you the times I ring him for advice, to chat, or just to have a kind person listen me. Thank you. Esther Meenken's newsletters are so enjoyable to read, thank you. Vanessa Cave, thank you for the outstanding website you maintain. James Curran I've enjoyed sending you out to battle for NZSA and thank you for taking up the challenge. Martin Hazelton, you've put me to shame as previous awards convener and taken the awards committee to new levels of organization and structure, thank you. Thank you to Steve Haslett in his role with the journal. The journal is a tribute to the statistics community and the positive relationship we have with our neighbours in Australia. Ian Westbrooke, thank you for your effort especially with the journal management and for being so supportive this year. The education subcommittee, once again, has excelled itself in the work they do. I get copies of emails amongst members of this group and it amazes me how dedicated, committed and hard working you all are – thank you. Thank you to many others who have worked so hard this year.

I will mention a few highlights of the year.

2011 conference

The 2011 conference is a great success. Thank you to the organizing committee of James Curran, Kathy Ruggiero, Thomas Yee, Harold Henderson, Chris Triggs, Thomas Lumley, Alain Vandal, Alexandra Miliotis, Alastair Scott, Vicky Fan and Stephen Cope; and to sponsors Hoare Research Software Ltd, SAS, Travelex and the University of Auckland.

The 2012 conference is in Dunedin and thank you to Austina Clark and the local organizing committee who have already put a lot of effort into planning.

Other events that NZSA has been involved with in sponsorship have been the highly successful including the Women in Statistics Conference, thank you Sharleen Forbes for a very rewarding day. We also contributed to the postgraduate conference (thank you to the University of Canterbury postgraduate organizers).

Journal

I want to make special mention of the journal, Australian & New Zealand Journal of Statistics. Management issues associated with the journal has taken considerable effort and time and thank you again to Steve Haslett, Roger Littlejohn, Ian Westbrooke, Murray Jorgenson and Harold Henderson.

World Statistics Day Oct 2010

20 October 2010 was the first World Statistics Day, a day to recognize the contribution of statistics to society. In New Zealand the day was marked by different events both at a local level and national level. I have mentioned the highly successful Women in Statistics conference. There were press releases and news items, school poster competitions and many other events. This was a wonderful day to reflect on what as statisticians we do and what a contribution we make.

Obituaries

This year has not been without sadness. Roger Littlejohn died 6 March 2011. I gave a tribute to Roger at his funeral. In writing this report I scanned back over reports the previous years. Here are the excerpts

“I want to mention especially Roger Littlejohn, our immediate past President. Not once in the many, many telephone calls and emails and not so subtle requests for him to continue working on something did he ever say to me, “I am no longer President, this is your job now”! Roger deserves a medal for his patience and being so polite to me at all times. I even left him with last minute NZSA work I should have done as I enjoyed last week on the ski slopes – even knowing I was on holiday and didn’t dampen his willingness! Thank you Roger” 2009

“I want to mention especially Roger Littlejohn whose commitment to NZSA is well above many of ours.” 2010.

Roger worked at AgResearch from 1983 and as an excellent statistician contributing to many fields including time series and hidden Markov models. Roger’s contribution to statistics was far more than that and he was very active in the NZSA and had been in the role of President, newsletter editor, and webmaster. Please visit the NZSA website and read the June 2011 newsletter for tributes to Roger.

The end of my term

This is my final report and for me the end of a wonderful 3 years. I said at the beginning of this report that it is a privilege to be part of the NZ statistics community.

For those of us from Christchurch since September 2010 when the earthquakes began, our lives will never be the same. How fitting it is that in my final report I can say a genuine thank you. I could not have got through the last year without NZSA. There were so many kind emails and messages, and genuine offers of help and support. I think I can speak for everyone in Christchurch, knowing we were not alone and that we are part of this family of NZSA made all the difference. Thank you.