

## NZSA President's Report (James Curran)

### AGM 2013

Welcome to the 2013 AGM.

This is my first report as President. Given my usual meeting style it may be very brief. Firstly I would like to take the opportunity to thank some specific people.

Thank you to Beatrix Jones for her fine work as secretary. Being secretary seems a rather thankless task, so I therefore take the opportunity to give Beatrix thanks. I would also like to make special mention of Martin Hazelton. We have had a lot more activity in the Award committee this year, especially with the introduction of our new prizes (to be awarded this evening). This has meant a lot of extra work for Martin. I am especially thankful for his proactive approach and attention to detail. Thanks also to Harold Henderson for his wise counsel, and his work as the membership secretary.” Thanks to Judi McWhirter for keeping our finances under control; Vanessa Cave for her superb oversight of the website, and continued maintenance; Steven Miller for his work on the newsletter; Ian Westbrooke for the journal management and Alasdair Noble/Mike Camden with the education committee. Thanks to all others who take part in the NZSA exec and keep our wheels rolling.

I will mention a few highlights of the year

#### *2013 Conference*

The 2013 conference is a great success. Thanks to the local organizing team of Vanessa Cave and Steven Miller, and the rest of the Waikato/AgResearch crew for organizing such a great conference. I would also like to thank Andrew Mason from the ORSNZ for embracing the idea of a joint conference. This collaboration has strengthened our conference effort and hopefully offered the opportunity to forge new links with members of the ORSNZ.

#### *New Awards*

As previously mentioned, with the perseverance of Martin Hazelton, the NZSA now has two new awards which will be used recognize the research excellence of our membership: the Littlejohn Research Award, recognizing research excellence over the last five years, and the Worsley Early Career award, recognizing research excellence in younger members of our society. These are great additions to our society and I hope they will become coveted prizes in the future.

#### *R User Groups*

Earlier this year, John Hayward, Ian Westbrooke and I spearheaded an effort to get the new established R User Groups (Auckland, Waikato, and Wellington currently) officially aligned with the NZSA. The R software is incredibly dominant, and its reaches extend far beyond traditional statistical realms. We hope, in establishing early links with these groups, that we will encourage more people to join the NZSA and take part in our activities. I am also very

keen for the next conference to have dedicated R sessions, and possibly an R related plenary speaker.

*Obituaries*

We lost Professor Shayle Searle earlier this year at the age of 84 after a short battle with cancer. Although Shayle spent most of his career in the United States, he always remembered his New Zealand roots, and returned extensively. He will be missed.

*The years ahead*

In 2010, Jennifer Brown wrote the following: *“I will finish with two personal views. I would like to see a commitment to recognize and reward statistical excellence in science. As statisticians we make a very large contribution to science and to society, so let us make sure we recognize and celebrate our successes. I hope we will see more statisticians receiving Royal Society awards and fellowships, and as members of panels that shape NZ science. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we nominate and encourage our colleagues for these awards.”* I would like to echo these comments. As New Zealanders we are often discouraged from promoting ourselves, or highlighting our own achievements. With the advent of performance evaluation exercises such as the PBRF we can no longer afford to sit around and hope someone else says how good we are. Nominations and awards for society prizes, and participation in national committees are recognized as evidence of peer esteem and contribution to the community. So please nominate those who you think deserve it and please continue to participate.

*2013 The Mathematics of Planet Earth*

In 2013 New Zealand Mathematics Association, the New Zealand Statistical Association, and the New Zealand Operations Research Society will take part in activities that dedicate 2013 as a special year for the Mathematics of Planet Earth. I encourage you strongly to take part and to help the NZSA organize activities that raise awareness about the importance of our subject.

Thank you all

James Curran