

## **Society for the Scientific Study of Reading**

President's Newsletter 2009

As 2009 draws to a close, I am happy to tell you that the Society is in good shape and a committed group of officers are working hard behind the scenes to ensure its smooth running - even this week, e-mail is alive with business! This year, thanks to Hugh Catts and Don Compton (and Nonie Lesaux who was the local organiser), we held another extremely successful conference in Boston where 453 delegates enjoyed a programme packed with more than 300 papers reporting new research - quite an achievement! For the first time the Society held a pre-conference workshop for early career researchers, organised by Helene Deacon. This event, on 'publishing and grant-getting', was very well received and it is our intention to repeat it in forthcoming years.

The conference also saw the Rebecca Sandak award received by Rebecca Betjeman of Regis University, its second recipient. Congratulations to Rebecca whose high-quality research has been represented at the conference for several years.

The Society's journal *Scientific Studies of Reading* has continued to flourish, with an impact factor of 2.625, and enough high-quality submissions to fill 6 issues per year. Charles Hulme handed over the reins of Editorship to Rauno Parrila in the Spring. Rauno has in turn appointed Helene Deacon and Paul van den Broek as Associate Editors ensuring the journal remains in good hands. We thank Charles for his hard work.

Some great news for the Society is that we have appointed Xi Chen (aka Becky) of OISE, Toronto, as its first executive secretary. I am delighted that Becky has accepted this role and she is full of ideas as to how it may be developed. During her first year, Becky will be getting to grips with the Society's annual cycle of events as well as helping with conference organisation.

I am very pleased to announce the results of the recent election of Board Members. Our congratulations go to Catherine (Cammie) McBride Chang has been elected Vice-President, which, in six year times, will make her our first President representing membership in the Far East. Her election left two spaces for Board members and I am pleased to tell you that Kate Cain (UK) and Nenagh Kemp (Tasmania) have been duly elected. At this time of year, we also say 'goodbye' to Board members and officers. First I want to thank Pieter Reitsma on behalf of the Society for serving the full 8-year term during which time he has made many positive changes to the way in which the Society runs. We thank Pieter and will miss his experience and superb memory for past procedures at the future Board meetings. I also thank the members whom I appointed to assist me, namely John Kirby as Secretary, Fred Morrison as Historian, and Marketa Caravolas as International Coordinator.

The 2010 conference will be chaired by President-Elect Don Compton and held at the Seminaris Campus Hotel Berlin from 7-10 July, 2010. We have had a bumper number of submissions, almost 100 more than last year. The conference committee has accepted 25/31 submitted symposia and is currently grading abstracts for individual papers; we will endeavour to accommodate as many of these as is practicable. The conference is growing at an alarming rate,

reflecting the quality of the science which members are producing. We may need to take some hard decisions in the future if we want to maintain the ambience and conviviality of our annual meeting. In the more distant future, Florida is likely to be the conference site for 2011 and we have in reserve the idea of a venue in Australia [though many members are concerned about the effects on the planet when the majority of members reside in North America or Europe].

A last piece of business is to encourage you to pay your membership dues in timely fashion (next week!), and also please encourage new members to join. We rely on dues, and the income from the journal, to underwrite the annual meeting, to pay administration costs, to sponsor the pre-conference workshop and to make travel awards (of which there will be two of \$1500 each this coming year). During 2009, we had a drive to increase the numbers of voting members to ensure our election results represent your views. From 2010, prospective voting members must have authored at least three empirical papers in peer-reviewed journals, be the first author of at least one of these, be an active member of SSSR and have given a spoken or interactive paper at the annual SSSR conference. We also are introducing a policy of removing entries from the register for student-members when no payments are received for 2 years successively and after 3 years for members.

Finally, may I close by thanking you for the privilege of serving as your President. It has been a great honour, and one which I am delighted to hand on to my successor Hugh Catts. Hugh is well known to you all and I cannot think of a better or more approachable person to lead the Society into its next phase. My thanks to Hugh for the support he has given to me and I wish him well during his term as President.

Maggie Snowling  
30th December 2009