



University of Otago
Te Whare Wananga o Otago

Centre for Gene Research

NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from your new Director

Becoming a Director is something that happens to other people and so I did not give it another thought as I left for a study leave at Oxford. I mentioned that I would be interested in the position as I left but that was partly departing bravado. Actually Murray exaggerated a little in the last Newsletter -- I did find out before December since a request for an Annual Report arrived in September while I was still out of the country. I still await an official letter of appointment. Given that the half-life of Directors is fairly short (two Directors in six years) this may not be a problem for long (will I have to leave town as well?).

I appreciate Murray's good humour and his efforts to keep the paperwork for the Centre going after he resigned. I do not foresee any major changes in the way the Centre has been operating. It has a relatively informal structure; besides there is no way in which the activities of a collection of highly creative and talented scientists can be 'directed'. The Centre is essentially a bottom-up organisation which represents the interests of the "workers" and it has gained some credibility and official recognition by the Administration. My intention is to keep things that way and avoid Administrative entanglements and to be able to speak on behalf of the members of the Centre. We represent a major scientific research group and bring to this University the majority of its externally funded research money. We potentially have a loud voice.

As some of you will know the Centre has put in a proposal to the Wellcome Trust Major Equipment Award for an upgrade to the DNA sequencer. I realise that there are members of the Centre who feel that we do not need any more resources being put into DNA sequencing. However in the list of proposals put forward to the Research Office, the DNA sequencer came to the top of the list. The bottomline was that if we did not go for the DNA sequencer we would not get anything. We have included a salary component in the proposal which will help the Centre's running costs and some robotic facilities for genomic library screening. The Wellcome Major Equipment

Awards for biomedical research comes up periodically and we can put in another proposal for something else.

At the recent Committee meeting we presented Murray Grigor with a book entitled 'The Wild South' with an inscription by Warren Tate as a token of appreciation of his work on behalf of the Centre. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Murray all the best for his move to the wild North and for his scientific endeavours in Hamilton -- and yes, Murray, we will keep you on our mailing list.

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