

**GENETICS SOCIETY OF CANADA**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
Tuesday June 20, 2006 12:45-1:45 PM  
NCB 113

In attendance: Rama Singh, Art Hilliker, Derrick Rancourt, George Fedak, Kabwe Nkongolo, John Vierula, Deb Court, Brian Golding, Donal Hickey, Peter Moens, Sue Varmuza, Alberto Civetta, Tony Griffiths, Steve Whyard, Bernie Duncker, Linda Bonen, Xuhua Xia, Clare Hasenkampf, Martin Mallet, Joanne Hackett, Barbara Spyropoulos, Ellen Larsen, Kathleen Hill, Susanne Kohalmi, Virginia Walker

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Rama Singh moved to add Linda Bonen's PAGSE report to the agenda under item 3. Paper copies of the PAGSE report were circulated at meeting and it is appended to the minutes.

2. APPROVAL OF AGM MINUTES of 2005 as published in the June 2005 issue of the Bulletin. Barbara Spyropoulos moved to approve the minutes.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Dr. Rama Singh

A central issue for the GSC during the past year has been the transition in our financial management. Other issues related to finance include declining membership, largely due to natural retirements and an increase in the number of more specialized societies. We have initiated a dialogue to solve these problems, and are bolstered by comments from members that support continued existence of the society and the conference, especially since we no longer have a general GSA conference. Possibilities for the future are not on agenda explicitly, but Rama urged people to raise issues when appropriate as the meeting proceeds today.

The GSC has now opted out of the CFBS, but individual members are reminded that they can still join the CFBS Society for the Life Sciences.

Linda Bonen gave a summary of her submitted PAGSE report. The PAGSE, or Partnership Group for Science and Engineering, consists of 25 Canadian Societies. Its objective is to increase dialogue between parliamentarians and different science and engineering groups. PAGSE activities include meetings with granting agencies, "bacon and egghead" meetings with parliamentarians, and involvement with the House of Commons finance committee.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT – Dr. Derrick Rancourt

Paper copies of the treasurer's report were circulated at the meeting and it is appended to the minutes [with one minor amendment made by Ellen Larsen – under item 5 change "deficit was" to "assets were"]. Derrick first discussed our new financial management – Lisa Snider of Snider's Web. She has run GSC three meetings successfully and her contract with us began Aug. 2005. In 2005, there were problems with the transfer of information from our old account manager, resulting in missing information when it was filed to our auditors. The plan is to have a complete financial report from her by the end of July, and to have the auditors do a second audit at that time. Nonetheless, Derrick assembled a financial picture up to end of 2005. Again, it appears our membership is decreasing. Our report from Lisa states that we had 258 last year but now have 171. This lower number may be at least in part due to errors in our current membership list. However, our income from membership is about \$7000; our assets are remaining reasonably stable due to increasing membership fees last year. We continue to need to develop other means to keep ourselves free of deficit. Our current assets sit at about \$70000, with maturation of a GIC approaching. Since interest rates are higher may want to

lock in on a longer term – he will be consulting with executive on this issue. Our main deficit is our management fees – as noted in the Treasurer’s report this amount is artificially low because the administrator hasn’t billed us. Some cost-saving measures we have made: reduced mailing costs for the Bulletin, a cap on student travel bursaries, and removal of financial award for the 3 GSC award recipients. For the auditor’s report, our TD line of credit is a credit not a deficit.

Discussion:

Shiva suggested that the Treasurer’s report has a separate line for Genome under administrative costs. Art commented that when he was president the GSC had a lot of assets, but even then there were concerns about declining membership and the eventual loss of funds. Barbara noted that it is important to remind members to pay fees at beginning of the year to ensure continuing membership, and so reminders need to be sent out by email to all members in advance. A discussion about the issue of continuing to send print copies of the bulletin followed. There is still strong support for continuing to send the print copy, particularly the annual meeting copy with meeting abstracts. Bernie suggested we add a checkbox to the membership form asking “do you want to continue to receive the Bulletin in print?” and send an email announcement with a link to the bulletin site. With regard to payment of membership fees, some found communication about payment of fees confusing and not up-to-date. Email communication about fees not paid needs to be done by the administrator. Others felt that a list of late-payers could be circulated so that local people could talk to them about paying. Rama suggested that, as well as cutting costs by removing financial award for 3 award members, we could call for member/corporate donations in their name for student awards.

5. ANNUAL DUES. – Dr. Derrick Rancourt  
No items to add.

6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS.

John Locke and Ross Hodgetts are thanked for their work on 2005 finances. A general discussion led to the suggestion that John Locke and Ross Hodgetts continue as auditors for 2006. Art suggested that in future that we have people local to the administrator’s office act as auditors so they can go to office and look at papers.

7. GENOME REPORT - Dr. Peter Moens

About half of our editors are in this area, and a number of them are in attendance at this meeting. The journal acquired four new editors this year: Drs. R. Danzmann, M. Puertas, J.S. Quinn, and D.J. Somers, and has gone from bimonthly to monthly as of Jan. 2006. Peter urged the membership to use Genome for publications – it publishes a variety of material, including reviews. Perhaps now it is available on the internet, the impact factor is not such an issue. He has found a wide response from a recent Genome paper. NRC makes Genome open access after 1 year. We should have a commemorative issue for the 50 year anniversary meeting, and perhaps devote the issue to a “genome” theme since the journal is not always genome-focused. This year Genome provided \$1000 in student awards, \$500 each for poster and platform talk. The award winners will be announced in Genome. Much applause from the membership for this donation!

Discussion: Art added that people should consider Genome for publishing at least some of their papers. He also finds the reviewers are superior to other journals. If one is publishing at a reasonable rate some papers can be in Genome. The quality of the publication and quality of images are high.

8. ELECTION REPORT – Dr. Virginia Walker

Virginia Walker would like to thank all the new executive members for graciously accepting nomination and for agreeing to serve the GSC. We are looking forward to an executive that will be

enriched by Drs. Paul Lasko (McGill; VP), Bernie Duncker (U. Waterloo; yeast/microorganism genetics rep and Eastern director) and George Haughn (UBC; plant genetics rep and Western Director). Due to some conflicts, not all suggested nominees for the positions were able to serve this year, but members are thanked for passing on suggestions to the Chair.

#### 9. MEETING REPORT - Dr. Shiva Singh

The Local Organizing Committee has been excellent. In particular, Susanne Kohalmi and Kathleen Hill have interacted with the CSM LOC very well. With 50:50 contributions from both societies, we are breaking even or making money. For registrants, we have 40 regular members, 40 graduate students/postdocs, and 21-22 undergrads = total up to yesterday was 120 plus. CSM registrants totaled about 350. Rama asked the membership to join him in thanking Shiva and the LOC for all of their work.

#### FUTURE MEETING – 2007 – 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Montreal with the Canadian Drosophila “Canfly” meeting – Donal Hickey

Initial organization has focused on accommodation. There are residences available at McGill but not at Concordia, and so the location of the meeting has evolved to McGill and Paul Lasko as LOC chair. This meeting will be coordinated with the fly community meeting. The exhibitor issue makes it important to do a joint meeting with the fly community so there will be the critical mass to attract exhibitors.

Discussion: Shiva noted that it takes a huge amount persistence to get the exhibitors to come (e.g. CSM had ~10% of exhibitors actually come). Rama suggested for future meetings we consider for 2009 a theme around the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Darwin’s Origin of Species, perhaps join with the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution. The 2008 meeting should be in the West, and the suggestion was made for Calgary and approaching Bill Brook about heading the LOC.

#### 10. AWARDS – Dr. Virginia Walker

Virginia Walker would like to thank all the members of the committee for their work. Because of some potential conflicts of interest, the committee was expanded to include additional members for particular awards. The reviewers for the awards included: Ms. N. Miller, Ms. J. Hackett, Dr. A. Simmonds, Dr. P. Young, Dr. J.P. Xu, Dr. J. Bell and Dr. A. Hilliker. Thank you all. The winners for the awards are published in the Bulletin with the paragraphs written by the committee chair. Members that evaluated our senior award were impressed with Dr. Fedak’s contribution to our society and to Genome. Accordingly, the committee also would like to thank Dr. R. Singh for kindly considering our suggestion of Dr. Fedak for a Presidential Citation.

Citations are not given frequently, so this is truly a prestigious award. The Chair respectfully asks the executive to consider publishing the names of the recipients of Presidential Citations in the Bulletin, along with the other award winners.

Rama commended Virginia for her work as chair of the Awards committee.

#### 11. STUDENT REPORT – Joanne Hackett

Joanne made a call to all supervisors to ask their students to submit material on their research to the bulletin. Joanne provided a list of students that have contributed since March 2004: Kathleen Fitzpatrick (SFU), Jamie Kwan (York), Matthew Young (Manitoba), Angela Varrin (Waterloo), Wensheng Zin (Queens), Ian Cleary (Alberta), Annika Haywood (Memorial), Kyle Anderson (Alberta), Martin Mallet (Queens), Ali Masoudi-Nejad (Kyoto). Martin Mallet was welcomed to the GSC executive as a student director.

12. NEW BUSINESS.

None.

13. CHANGE OF OFFICERS.

Virginia Walker received a Presidential plaque from Rama Singh as she completed her term as past-president of the GSC. Bernie Duncker and Sue Varmuza received thanks and GSC pins as incoming and outgoing directors, respectively.

14. ADJOURNMENT.

At 2 p.m.

## Treasurer's Report

**1. New GSC Management:** On August 1<sup>st</sup>, Lisa Snyder took over the management of the GSC Accounts, based in the rationale that we were spending too much money (~\$7000 pa) on management fees. There continues to be logistical issues, as Lisa has not been receiving monthly statements from the bank. This was only brought to my attention last week and it has since been rectified through a change of address. Because of these bumps, our financial picture is only to the end of December 2005.

**2. Membership.** As I mentioned in my last report, membership is our most critical area of concern. Our numbers have declined considerably again (171 members compared with 258 members the year before). This decline of membership might be the result of the Executive's decision to raise membership fees in conjunction with our withdrawal from the CFBS.

**3. Financial Picture.** As I mentioned in my previous report, we are dipping into our savings at a rate of ~\$7000 per year. Although our increase in membership fees was meant to suppress our burn rate, we appear to not have been successful. Total membership payments for 2006 (so far) are \$7165, which is only slightly higher than last year's membership income of \$6740. We can choose to wait a little longer to see if more members come in, but we need to continue to discuss further cost cutting measures, such as no longer printing the bulletin, which would save us over \$2000 per year. Without further changes, the burn rate will be ~\$4000 per year giving the society perhaps only 10-15 more years of life.

Our primary asset base, a GIC matures in July and we must decide on whether to lock it in for one or more years. Last year, based on an anticipated hike in interest rates, we held off on a long term investment and chose to lock it in for a one year term at 2.3%. We may choose a similar strategy this year, and dip into our line of credit at the end of the fiscal year.

**4. Breakdown on Total Assets** as of December 31, 2005 is as follows:

CIBC bank chequing account	\$ 3,092.67
TD Savings Account	\$ 8,639.24
TD Investments	\$55,000.00
Interest Receivable	\$ 4,022.01
<u>Accounts Receivable</u>	<u>\$ 93.15</u>
Total Assets	\$70,847.07

**5. Deficit.** Last year's deficit is artificially low, as we were not billed by Lisa in 2005 and we were late in paying some administrative costs due to the transfer of the accounts. As of Dec. 31, 2005, our total assets were \$58,132.03. Administrative costs totaled \$53,887.65. This includes professional services (i.e. management) which totaled \$4244.38. Total income was \$58,204.47. Most of the items in the income and expense sheets are income neutral as they come in and go out essentially intact. A breakdown on the main non-neutral items for the last year are as follows:

Postage and courier	\$ 869.19
Bulletin production	\$ 2059.99
Bank Fees	\$ 1064.65
Travel	\$ 3,101.13
Awards	\$ 2,342.91
<u>Management fees</u>	<u>\$ 4,850.72</u>
	\$14,288.59

As the GSC representative for PAGSE (Partnership Group for Science and Engineering ([www.pagse.org](http://www.pagse.org)), I have been attending the PAGSE monthly meetings since fall 2005. These meetings have featured guest speakers from federal granting agencies and science-based private sector to discuss the status (and challenges) of science and engineering in Canada. Over recent months, this has included Ron Freedman (Impact Group), Peter Brenders (BioteCanada), Pierre Coulombe (NRC president), Eliot Phillipson (CFI president), Alan Bernstein (CIHR president) Suzanne Fortier (NSERC president), and Janet Halliwell (SSHRC president). PAGSE also sponsors regular Bacon & Egghead breakfast meetings on Parliament Hill (with leading scientists as speakers) and an Annual Symposium to bring together “top researchers in innovation” with parliamentary members. Notably PAGSE is not a lobby group, but rather its role is to foster dialogue with Federal Parliamentarians and senior government officials to inform them about issues of importance to the research and innovation community in Canada.

Another PAGSE activity is to submit an annual brief to the House of Commons Finance Committee and the 2006 one is currently underway (previous ones are posted at [www.pagse.org](http://www.pagse.org)). Issues raised in past briefs have included “concerns regarding the training of highly qualified personnel, private sector research investment, the need for national-level priority setting for government investment in S&T, a balanced national research capacity, the commercialization of innovation, and improving Canada’s capacity to participate in international research” (paraphrased from the 2006 draft document). In consultation with the GSC executive, our suggestions this year were [1] concern about the trend towards coupling between fundamental research funding and requirement for industrial matching funds (cf. “Problems with co-funding in Canada” in *Science* 308:1867, 2005 re. Genome Canada) and [2] concern about how to foster creativity and innovative thinking in the next generation of scientists.

PAGSE is also currently seeking corporate sponsors to assist PAGSE’s effort to act as a national voice for science and engineering in advancing “research/development/commercialization for the benefit of all of this country’s citizens”, and potential contact names of companies related to our field would be appreciated.

Submitted by Linda Bonen  
June 12, 2006