

## FROM THE EDITOR

The reader will notice that despite our previous announcement (Long 1995) of *RADIOCARBON*'s discontinuance of date-list publication, this issue contains four date lists, plus one article that is a compilation of dates with text related to a specific research topic. What is going on here? Do our actions belie our words? I prefer to call it institutional flexibility.

In view of the exploding volume of radiocarbon dates in recent years, mostly AMS-based, neither this nor any journal can be a repository of all dates. Individual laboratory databases and research publications are now the primary  $^{14}\text{C}$  date archives. My back issues of *RADIOCARBON* have often been a valuable resource for dates that had been published only here. These date lists also revealed important details of laboratory techniques and pretreatment procedures that were often omitted in application-focused publications. In some cases, date lists served as formal announcements of the initiation of new  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating facilities and personnel. When we received the date list submissions in this issue, we realized that nearly 50 years of tradition is hard to break. Moreover, we recognize the importance of providing a showcase for relatively new laboratories to demonstrate their capabilities and application interests.

Thus, we now find ourselves in a transition state. We cannot predict how the date-list situation will sort out. We do know that fewer date lists arrive in our mailbox. We also know that establishing a comprehensive, single-site  $^{14}\text{C}$  database is not feasible. One possibility is that we could publish the web site address for each laboratory whose directors wish to make available details of their techniques and personnel. They could even advertise here the availability of online, searchable  $^{14}\text{C}$  databases for dates they have produced. Meanwhile, recognizing that these are changing times, we will publish date lists at the discretion of the editors.<sup>1</sup>

Please contact us here with feedback about how we (the  $^{14}\text{C}$  community) should deal with the future of  $^{14}\text{C}$  data information.

*Austin Long*

## REFERENCE

Long, A. 1995 From the Editor. *Radiocarbon* 37(3): iii.

<sup>1</sup>This reintegration of date lists also means that we are discontinuing our separate publication of *Radiocarbon Date Lists*, whose 1995 and 1996 issues were available as computer files only.