



Dear Member,

At the beginning of our term in office, I want to thank Digby and his team (Hendrik Jerling and Rodney Owen) for their dedication towards the Society the past years. There were some difficulties, especially around the Journal, but I must congratulate Digby on his leadership.

There is a call from our Journal Editor for your support. According to Mike the Journal will soon be listed in the “Thompson Reuters’s Journal Citation Reports” which is a positive step forward. Please keep contributions coming, as the Journal is only as strong as its support (refer to Editor’s letter).

With regard to conferences I am sorry that the proposed September 2008 conference in the Drakensberg couldn’t take place due to some technical complications. However, for this year the conference is planned for 22-24 June 2009 at the Magaliesberg Conference Centre near the Hartebeespoort Dam (North West Province) and the theme is "Beyond rapid assessments - time for an aquatic research renaissance in southern Africa." The aim of the conference is to:

- Provide a stimulating intellectual experience which advances our science.
- Raise the profile of the Society in the broader social system.
- Raise funds with which we can promote the Society and serve its members.

With the theme we want to stimulate debate is the need to refocus research on the fundamentals of our different fields, use current expertise to train and guide new practitioners in the water sector and ensure that the sector grows to be the strongest in Africa. Some claim there is capacity problems within the water sector, while others may claim that we must just use the expertise availability more effectively. The challenge is in getting the young people who train within the various fields to become actively involved in the water sector and then make a meaningful career to ensure that they become the best in their respective fields of expertise. There is no quick fix!

The 2010 conference will be in the Northern Cape at Augrabies National Park (“Aquatic biodiversity and climate change – an arid region perspective”) and the 2011 meeting at the Phongolapoort Dam (“Sustainable utilisation of southern African aquatic resources”).

Please submit your proposal for “SASAqS Medals” to Dr Jan Roos. The award criteria for the medals are printed in the newsletter and I urge people to consider your applications carefully.

Lastly, to the team who will help me, thank you. I hope that the Society members will support us and ensure that the Newsletters, Conference and the Journal are the best in the sector. Please attend the AGM during the meeting and get the ball rolling. We want more students to join and would like to propose a special rate for students registering, let us discuss this at the meeting.

Please send comments to us. Use the newsletter to inform us about relevant information, events in your area and courses that you present to the water sector.

Thank you,

Wynand Vlok  
(President)

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***The SASAqS “team” for the next term***

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## **From the Editor:**

Well, the journal has just come through its second year of producing three issues, and already I'm pushing like a front-end-loader to get manuscripts ready for the first issue of 2009. Currently there are three manuscripts accepted for AJAS 34(1) [2009] and 62 others under review. Behind the scenes there are LOTS of people at work revising, reviewing and publishing manuscripts for AJAS.

The decision to up-grade to three issues per year was based on the fact that, for several years running, we'd published 300 or more pages per year, and I felt we could make that into three 100-pagers, simultaneously getting a faster turn-around time. We succeeded in doing that in 2007 and now, under Mike Schramm's guidance at NISC, it looks like we'll make it in 2008 as well.

These efforts, on our combined parts, have been crowned by Thompson Reuters at last (after several failed applications) including the African Journal of Aquatic Science in their Journal Citation Reports (JCR) and Science Citation Index Expanded. The JCR is the world's leading authority for evaluating the impact and influence of the world's foremost research journals and, among other data, presents the widely-used journal impact factors. We will receive our first impact factor in the 2009 JCR which is published in the spring of 2010.

Having an Impact Factor, or an "ISI-rating", is the deciding factor in whether or not some authors choose to submit manuscripts to a given journal. Therefore, the prospects are that AJAS can expect to receive more, and better, manuscripts than before, which should in turn mean that we get more widely read. We, for our part, must now be stricter in accepting manuscripts for publication and also faster in our reviewing system. So there's a stick, as well as a carrot in this Lucky Packet!

Clearly, the future's going to be "interesting"!

Mike Coke, Editor, African Journal of Aquatic Science

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## Some aspects concerning the 2009 medals

**(Please not the Presidents request for nominations – that you must submit to Jan Roos)**

### **Criteria for the awarding of Medals**

Three possible awards are made by SASAQS viz. Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. The details concerning eligibility for these awards are as follows (relevant detail extracted from the SASAQS Constitution):

#### **6. AWARDS**

- (a) The Society shall award Gold and Silver Medals on appropriate occasions.
- (b) A Gold medal shall be awarded on rare occasions in recognition of an exceptionally high standard of research in the aquatic sciences, or an exceptionally valuable contribution to the management, conservation or development of aquatic ecosystems or resources, over an extended period.
- (c) A Silver medal shall be awarded irregularly in recognition of the exceptionally high standard of a specific piece of research in the aquatic sciences or of the exceptionally high standard of a particular contribution to the management, conservation or development of aquatic ecosystems or resources.
- (d) A Bronze medal shall be awarded irregularly in recognition of the exceptionally high standard of a specific piece of work by a junior scientist or manager. This work shall normally be in the form of a dissertation.

The Bronze medal should be for the best student thesis in a year motivated by the supervisor, as judged by the medals committee (in the light of the examiners reports and review by the medals committee).

The Standing Committee on Awards met in 1999 and clarified some of the uncertainties related to wording from the constitution:

- Not all awardees need be SASAQS members. This would be open to the Awards Committees discretion but should be guided by the fact that the awardee should have contributed to Southern African Ecosystems and/or have had some involvement with the Society.
- The award for a “major” work need not have been peer reviewed in an international journal as the “work” is not always of a research nature. There was no period of exclusion before a piece of work that had been motivated for an award, but which had been turned down, could be resubmitted for an award.
- The Awards Committee does not have the power to either up- or down-grade a nomination in terms of the medal to be awarded. This would have to be referred back to the proposer with a recommendation to resubmit in the appropriate category.
- Generally it was agreed that the Awards Committee should be allowed to act in the spirit of the Society on the strengths and merits of each motivation.
  
- The secret ballot process for voting on nominations by awards committee members is as follows: Members of the committee will receive nominations from the Awards Committee Secretary with a form to simply mark acceptance or rejection of the proposed medal. The completed form is then placed into an unmarked envelope, placed into a second envelope and posted to the Secretary who will collate all unmarked envelopes and send to the Awards Committee Chairman.

## The Website

The peripatetic SASAqS website is currently located at <http://www.riv.co.za/sasaqs/> (the same server as the River Health Programme database). The layout is a simple design kindly provided free by a Swede, Andreas Viklund, from Jokkmokk. As the StatCounter results show (Figure), the site is hardly a hive of activity. Eight unique visitors on a day is quite an event.

A recent addition is a membership application form, and the first electronic membership application was on 21 November 2008.

Members are welcome to submit corrections and contributions to the site.

Mike Silberbauer (webmaster)

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