

SASAQS

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Spring 1995

**Newsletter of the Southern African
Society of Aquatic Scientists**

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Nothing seems to cause as much turbulence in the calm waters of this society as the question of conference venues and accommodation. Aesthetics and ascetics have been brought into sharp conflict by the conference planned for Victoria Falls next year. This will undoubtedly be the most expensive conference ever organised by SASAQS and there is some foreboding that this marks a new trend in SASAQS conference style. The truth is that this is a once-in-a-lifetime event, a celebration of the end of political boycotts and an attempt to broaden our contact with the rest of Africa. The fact that we live on constant or declining incomes in an inflationary economy means that the traditional SASAQS conference held at a university will remain the norm.

In the light of this, it is encouraging that the organisers of the 1994 conference held at Port Elizabeth University have payed a large sum into the society's account. The accounts for the 1995 ZSSA / SASAQS conference in Grahamstown have not been completed, but the organisers showed that university accommodation need not only be reasonably priced but that it can be comfortable and convenient. This probably had nothing to do with a certain arts festival that began the following week.

Finally, are the days of printed newsletters numbered? Subscribe to awater on the Internet and see what you think. - MJS

This year saw the transition of the executive from Cape Town to Grahamstown, and I'd like to start by expressing our deep appreciation to Jenny Day, her Council and all the rest of the Cape Town team for the way that they have served the society during their term of office. They have been very supportive during the transition, and their efficiency has made the take over very smooth for us. The new Council is made up as follows:

President	-	Prof Jay O'Keeffe
Vice-president	-	Dr Jenny Day
Secretary	-	Dr Carolyn Palmer
Treasurer	-	Mr Bill Harding
		Dr Jim Cambray as local representative
Regional Rep.	-	Dr Alan Whitfield

Jim Cambray has kindly agreed to stand in for Tally Palmer as Secretary for this AGM, as Tally is attending the SETAC conference in Copenhagen. Brian Allanson has agreed to continue with the arduous task of Journal Editor, in which he is ably assisted by his wife Sue, and we are all very appreciative of their efforts. A number of other people have generously agreed to assist with the running of the society, and we are grateful for their support. The various portfolios are as follows:

Correspondence	-	Dr Patsy Goetsch
Membership	-	Lil Haigh
Newsletter	-	Mandy Uys, Angus Patterson, and Mike Silberbauer
Minutes Sec.	-	Margi Rogers
Journal Liaison	-	Dr Ferdy de Moor
Internat. Link	-	Dr Paul Skelton
Marine Link	-	Prof Christopher McQuaid

The regions have changed a bit since last year, but the following are still the representatives for those regions that are covered:

Gauteng, Northern Province & Mpumalanga	-	Dirk Roux
Free State	-	Jan Roos
Western Cape	-	Geordie Ractliffe
Eastern Cape	-	Alan Whitfield
KwaZulu/Natal	-	Chris Dickens
Northern Cape & Northwest	-	C. "Ben" Benade
Kenya	-	W. Kudoja
Namibia	-	Shirley Bethune
Botswana	-	H. Masundire

So we've got quite a formidable team, and we're confident that we can keep the society buoyant and active over the three years of our office.

Present activities:

We've spent the first half of this year getting ourselves organised and taking over the duties of the society from the Cape Town team. Keeping Bill Harding on as Treasurer is a godsend, and, with

Jenny Day staying on as V-P, gives us valuable continuity with the previous Council.

The society's contribution to the development of a revised Water Act has continued. Tally Palmer coordinated the responses of members and submitted them to the Minister. The society was subsequently asked to nominate a representative to serve on the Minister's monitoring team to consider the public response to the document *You and Your Water Rights*, and after consultation with the regional representatives, we have nominated Tally. She will be required to spend about a month in Pretoria this year to take part in this important procedure.

Mandy Uys, Angus Patterson and Mike Silberbauer have produced another excellent issue of the Newsletter, and Parts 1 and 2 of Volume 20 of the Journal have been distributed after heroic efforts by the Allansons. The next issue will depend on manuscripts of suitable calibre being submitted, the lack of manuscripts having been the major reason for the delay in the previous issue. We have been able to arrange for a special supplement to accompany the next issue - comprising a group of papers summarising the results of a workshop on Fishways in South Africa. The Water Research Commission have generously agreed to sponsor the supplement, which is being jointly edited by Anton Bok and Brian Allanson.

The Marine Science Society of Southern Africa is considering whether it has a role to play as a separate society, and I have had talks with Denzil Miller, the MSSSA representative for the western Cape, and Colin Buxton, the representative for the eastern Cape, about the possibility of merging the two societies. As you know, the old LSSA was transformed into SASAQS in order to accommodate marine scientists, but this happened at a time when the MSSSA was being set up, so that our initiative for a joint society was not as successful as it might have been. If the MSSSA does decide to disband, there is of course, nothing to stop its members from joining any learned society that they wish to. However, I have made strong representations to the MSSSA to consider a formal merger with SASAQS, and I would like the issue to be discussed at this AGM.

Since SASAQS is set up as a joint society, there would be no necessity for changes to our constitution to accommodate the members of the MSSSA, but there may be issues that would need to be addressed, such as safeguards to ensure adequate representation for the different interests within the resulting society. Your Council is very much in favour of pursuing negotiations with the MSSSA, but before we do so, we have agreed to seek

comments from the members at the AGM. If the members in both societies are in favour of exploring the option of a merger, then detailed negotiations will begin. Any proposals that might lead to changes in the present constitution of SASAQS would have to be agreed by the present membership through a ballot.

Future plans:

With the new political situation, the rest of Africa is now open to us, and we've had lots of interest in the society from North of the border. Obviously, this is one avenue for us to pursue to increase our flagging membership.

As Jenny Day pointed out in her report last year, it's often difficult for prospective members from the rest of Africa to afford our membership, and we should think of ways in which we can sponsor or reduce fees for at least an initial period of membership. Thanks to Bill Harding's careful management, and the success of previous congresses, the society's finances are in good shape, and we should think of useful ways of employing some of this money to promote the membership of the society. The Victoria Falls Conference next year will give the society a valuable profile north of the border, and congratulations to Pete Ashton and his committee for doing such an excellent job with the preliminary arrangements.

Conclusions:

The society is obviously thriving in its interests and activities, and there is plenty of potential for new and exciting expansion. The limits to the activities and success of the society are only the amount of time and effort that members are prepared to put into making their ideas into reality.

There remain a couple of worrying trends: the membership of the society is down to 200 paid-up individual members, from 231 reported at the last AGM, and there are 36 subscribers and corporate members. Bill Harding went through the membership list last year, and found that there were a number of unpaid members (included in the 231) who were actually retired or had moved into different fields. There were 5 resignations and 10 new members in the past year, so that numbers of members active in the field are not declining, but few new scientists are joining. There does not appear to be widespread dissatisfaction from the members, so does this mean that we're not getting new people coming into the field? or that young scientists don't think it's worthwhile to join the society? Either way we need to address this problem and I'll report on our findings at the next AGM.

The second concern is the lack of suitable manuscripts being submitted to the journal. Again the reasons are not obvious. The journal is rated by the FRD, and is a good vehicle for the dissemination of information of local as well as international interest. Are the editorial standards too high? is the readership too limited? We need to get some feedback from members.

Your council looks forward to tackling these opportunities and problems in the next two and a half years. Please let us know if you have suggestions or complaints - if you don't tell us it's difficult for us to do what you want, but remember, it's **your** society, so if you want your ideas to be taken seriously, you're likely to be asked to take part.

- Jay O'Keeffe

TREASURER'S REPORT

I apologize for not being able to attend this year's meeting in Grahamstown. The level of national and international interest in my cyanobacterial toxin lab, coupled with the demands of the Theewaterskloof programme, have precluded me from making the trip to the town where I went to both school and university.

Before I report on the society's finances for the 1994 financial year, I wish to thank the new SASAQS executive for their confidence in asking me to remain as treasurer during their period of office. Despite the geographical separation, I am confident that the overall management of the society's affairs will continue to function smoothly.

You have before you copies of the audited statements of the society's books of account for the 1994 year. The society operated well within budget

and net income was significantly boosted from the healthy surplus generated from the conference held in Port Elizabeth, a donation from the Afriwater Conference and from an improving situation of subscription collections. The society's investment continues to flourish and would now support an additional edition of the journal each year. If only the membership would provide support in kind and submit manuscripts! Despite repeated calls for help in this regard, very few people appear to be listening. If recognition of the journal continues to be an insoluble problem, then perhaps the society should consider a smaller and more frequent publication for maintaining contact with its members. The *Freshwater Forum* of the UK's Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) is one such example.

- Bill Harding

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1994		
	1994	1993
	R	R
INCOME	49373	21572
Subscriptions	17123	15840
Interest received	6330	5722
Congress surplus	23870	
Journal sales	50	
Donations received	2000	10
EXPENSES	12471	16948
Administration and typing	1105	1373
Audit fee	830	970
Bank charges	160	106
Honoraria	2000	2000
Postage and telephone	1850	1786
Printing and stationery	6526	10713
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	<u>36902</u>	<u>4624</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	55744	51120
ACCUMULATED FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>92646</u>	<u>55744</u>

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 1994			
	NOTE	1994	1993
		R	R
FUNDS EMPLOYED			
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		92646	55744
EMPLOYMENT OF FUNDS			
INVESTMENTS	1	83445	51400
NET CURRENT ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS		18196	13304
Current account and cash on hand		13696	9304
Prepaid expenses	2	4500	4000
CURRENT LIABILITIES		8995	8960
Audit fee		1000	900
Creditors	3	7500	8000
Prepaid subscriptions		495	60
		<u>92646</u>	<u>55744</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1994

	#	#
	R	R
1 INVESTMENTS		
Nedbonus Savings Account	83445	51400

2 PREPAID EXPENSES
Advance payments for the 1995 and 1996 congresses.

3 CREDITORS
Provision for printing and stationery expenses in respect of current year, paid during the next financial year.

GAUTENG - NORTHERN PROVINCE - MPUMALANGA

Activities in this region were dominated by the organisation of the 1996 Vic Falls conference and by change (especially in names of provinces and institutions, and work addresses of members). I will devote most of this report to the progress of the Vic Falls Organising Committee (VFOC).

If you recall earlier communications, the reasons for deciding to venture outside our country's borders for the 1996 conference are to:

- advertise our society more widely outside South Africa and specifically in southern Africa,
- have a really special and memorable get-together for members,
- have a drawcard for overseas participation and to attract more water resource managers.

While the general idea of the conference is to retain specialised, technical and student papers, strong emphasis will be placed on providing an overall water monitoring, assessment and management picture. For this the VFOC will specifically invite speakers, both locally and from abroad, to address necessary theme components.

Three aspects of the organisation thus far have proved to be particularly troublesome. These issues, namely logistics, cost and abstract deadlines, deserve further mention. The logistical problem of having the conference venue and organising committee 900km apart was partly countered by contracting the company Green Route to assist with travel and accommodation bookings in Zimbabwe. Green Route specialises in corporate incentives and meetings inbound to Zimbabwe, with offices in Harare and Johannesburg. Further challenges on the logistics front are for the VFOC to tackle and members should not be unduly worried...

Conference costs, however, affect everyone. It is realised that the current cost will make it difficult or impossible for some members, particularly students, to attend. The results of efforts to attract sponsorship have thus far been disappointing. An alternative option would be to minimise the

conference registration fee, so that it still includes certain special events but excludes meals and accommodation. This would allow people to make their own accommodation arrangements, where the options range from reasonably priced cottages to Z\$10.00 per night camping facilities.

The VFOC would like to encourage as many people as possible to try to stay in the Elephant Hills Hotel, since everything will happen in and around the hotel. It is also felt that the package deal offered is very reasonable considering the nature of accommodation and the special social programme. Furthermore, if at least 80 to 100 beds are not booked in advance, Elephant Hills and the Vic Falls conference as a whole will not be financially viable. The less beds, the higher the unit cost. The VFOC hopes to finalise negotiations with Zim Sun on a package within the next two months. If costs rise appreciably, the VFOC will be obliged to look for a less exotic venue, such as the CSIR conference centre in Pretoria.

The last issue is the deadline for the submission of abstracts. The VFOC originally asked--in the first conference flyer--for detailed abstracts one year in advance. Replies received from members reflected a wide range of emotions, from amusement to incredulity. A few even sent abstracts. The original idea was to publish selected papers as a conference proceedings in a peer-reviewed journal. The VFOC was hoping to use the *Journal of Aquatic Ecosystem Health and Management* for this purpose but cost implications rendered this a less attractive option. The current most likely option is still to select papers that best fit in with the main themes. Authors would be asked to write them up as full papers that will be made available during the conference. These papers could then be submitted to our society journal to undergo the normal peer review process and possibly contribute to a special edition of the journal. The next flyer, due in about two months' time, will contain more information in this regard.

- Dirk Roux

WESTERN CAPE

There is rather little to report on the activities of the society in the Western Cape for the 1994/5 period. I have spent some time assisting with the move of the society books and papers to the new executive committee in Grahamstown and will continue to organise printing and mailing of the society newsletter.

With the new membership forms now being available, I intend to go on a major recruitment drive in the next six months. The target for **new** members in our region by the end of this year is 251.

- Geordie Ractliffe

KWAZULU/NATAL

Unfortunately, I did not attend last year's AGM at Port Elizabeth, so I was blissfully unaware that I had been elected to serve as the Regional Representative! When this was discovered, it was just too late to do anything about activities before July. This was unfortunate as we missed joining forces with an excellent WISA meeting that would have been stimulating to many of our members.

There was nevertheless contact with some of those who had contributed to the kwaZulu/Natal contribution to the Water Act, but only on an informal basis. It seems that SASAQS was far ahead in its submission so that when the booklet was issued by the Minister for Water Affairs and Forestry calling for submissions there was little that we could add. It did not seem worth calling another meeting to go over the same thing and no new or exciting suggestions have been forthcoming from any other source. Overall the combined submission draw up by Tally Palmer and colleagues was well done and

seemed to cover all aspects.

In attempting to draw up a list of activities for the new kwaZulu/Natal region, it became clear that all is not right in our field of research in this province. Not only are the members on our list scattered throughout the province but many are inactive, especially when it comes to SASAQS functions. It may also be significant that most of our members are individuals and are not part of a combined research effort. For some reason aquatic research is not very high on the agenda in kwaZulu/Natal! But, putting this aside and looking to the future, I would like to issue an appeal to all members in this province to come up with ideas to bring us together and then also to support these functions when they are planned. Please send your ideas through to me at Umgeni Water and I will draw up a programme for the 1995/6 period.

- Chris Dickens

EASTERN CAPE

The Eastern Cape Branch was involved in two major events during the past year. The first entailed the transfer of SASAQS Executive activities from Cape Town to Grahamstown and the second involved preparations for the 1995 Annual Conference. The Executive Committee transfer was undertaken with a minimum of hiccups and the joint symposium with the Zoological Society of Southern Africa appears to have been a great success. My thanks go to all those Eastern Cape SASAQS members who have been involved in one or both of the above initiatives.

In addition to acting as Secretary in the new SASAQS Executive Committee, Tally Palmer has played a key role in involving the Society in the development of a new Water Act. Tally, we are all very appreciative of the part you have played in coordinating members' suggestions concerning the future water policy of the country.

- Alan Whitfield

NORTHERN CAPE & NORTH WEST

Due to health (injury) reasons and the political changes in the RSA during the reporting period, nothing constructive had been done in this region with regards to SASAQS activities.

Membership is the main issue to be addressed and, with the assistance of EXCO, it will receive priority

during 1995/96. This will be done by means of personal contact, a media campaign and at least one information meeting to create a structure for the Society in the NC and NW. If successful, this region could be the venue for the 1998 conference.

- C Benade

**MINUTES OF THE 32nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN GRAHAMSTOWN
ON 28 JUNE 1995 AT 11:00 AM.**

1. Welcome and attendance

The president welcomed everyone to the 32nd SASAQS annual general meeting.

Present:

J. O’Keeffe (President), J.A. Cambray (Acting Secretary and Acting Treasurer), B.R. Allanson (Editor), A.K. Whitfield (Regional Reps), J.B. Adams, C. Benade, I.R. Bills, S.J.M. Blaber, A.H. Bok, C. Buxton (invited), H.F.B. Champion, M. Coetzee, M. Coke, J. Day, H.F. Dallas, B.R. Davies, N.T. Demetriades (representing A.T. Forbes), F.C. de Moor, H.H. du Preez, M.J. Gabriel, N. Grange, K.C.D. Hamman, A.D. Harrison, R.C. Hart, C.J. Hay, N.D. Impson, P.B.N. Jackson, C.D. McQuaid, N. Muller, R.K. Owen, R.W. Palmer, N.A. Rayner, D.J. Roux, K.M.F. Scott, M.J. Silberbauer, P.H. Skelton, C.D. Snaddon, L.R. Taylor, J.O. Tetteh, M.C. Uys, P.W. Wade, D.C. Weeks, S. Weldrick, V. Wepener and M.W. Wishart (n = 45).

2. Apologies:

D.J. Alletson, P. Ashton, H.M. Barber-James, M. Chutter, D.P. Cyrus, C. Dickens, P. Goetsch, L. Hill, J. Howard, J.M. King, U. Looser, C.G. Palmer, T. Pike, G. Quibell, G. Ractliffe, M. Seaman, W. Selkirk and M. van Veelen, (n = 18).

3. Additions to the agenda:

Attendance of aquatic scientists at other conferences
- Mr B. Benade.

4. Minutes of the 31st AGM:

It was noted that R. Hart had sent in his apologies. With this amendment the minutes were accepted. (B. Davies proposed, J. Day seconded).

5. Matters arising:

5.1. Journal Editor Prof. Allanson generously agreed to continue for a further term as editor.

5.2. Medals committee: Dr J. Day had been coopted onto the committee listed at the last meeting.

5.3. Marine & Phycology representative: Prof. C. McQuaid was the marine representative. There is as yet no phycology representative.

5.4. Information to members of government (Point 18.2 of 1994 minutes): The President would offer the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry membership to the Society.

5.5. Term of office of Council: The President proposed that it would be put to the membership that the term of office for the Council should be three and not two years. This requires a change to the constitution and members would have to be balloted. Prof. B. Allanson suggested that this be raised during the year and discussed at the 33rd AGM. Dr P. Skelton moved that if the ballot favoured three years then the present council should sit for three years. The President said that the Council would ballot members and that he would report on results at the next AGM.

6. President’s report (see separate article):

The report was presented by J. O’Keeffe and accepted.

There were 231 members in 1994 and only 200 paid up members in 1995. There had been ten new members and five resignations during the year. However, a number of inactive or retired members, and some whose careers have been redirected, have recently been removed from the list of members, so that the reduction over the past year is more apparent than real. The President opened his report for discussion. Dr P. Skelton noted that Africa is opening up for South Africans and in general Africa lacks good societal contacts. The President noted that it was good to hear this from Dr Skelton as he has been elected as the international link person for the Society. Prof. Allanson said that the Society required a glossy brochure which it then could circulate to potential members. The brochure should contain the aims and objectives of the Society. Public Relations work on behalf of the Society is important.

The President said that he would investigate the possibility of a brochure. Prof. B. Allanson suggested that Gencor or Mazda be presented with a specific request to sponsor the brochure. Dr P. Skelton suggested that there could be a foreign membership category at a reduced subscription rate and that they would get the newsletter and possibly not the journal. Mr D. Weeks said that there could be a subsidy for foreign students as some journals had special lower rates for third world subscribers. The President said that the Council would take all these suggestions into consideration.

7. Treasurer’s report (see separate article):

The report was presented by Dr J.A. Cambray and accepted.

Dr P. Skelton pointed out that the role of the Society is not to have money in the bank but to employ the capital. The President suggested that some of the money could be used to subsidise several students which would enable them to attend the 1996 conference at Victoria Falls. The committee could invite written applications from students. Prof. C. Buxton suggested that the society should invest some of the accumulated funds and spend the interest on projects.

8. Editor’s report:

The report was presented by Prof. B. Allanson and accepted. The last issue of the journal had been delayed as he had been overseas for two months. Potential contributors to the journal must comply with the requirements and read the instructions on the journal. Figures should be able to be reduced to fit the journal’s requirements. The Editor noted that he had been concerned for some time that the FRD gives national journals lower ratings whereas

international journals are given high ratings. It was suggested that the FRD are being very short-sighted in this policy which would ultimately result in the demise of the South African journals. The Committee for Scientific Publications is reviewing which journals they will support in the future, but we are independent which is a healthy situation for our journal. Authors should attend to the comments made by these referees as soon as possible. The next issue will be out before October. The idea is to have two issues a year. The research notes section included articles of interest of less than two pages (NOT full length manuscripts). In closing he noted that it had been a successful but frustrating year for the editor and that feedback was essential. Finally he thanked his wife, Susan, for all the hours she spends on the journal. Prof. B. Davies noted that the Editor was doing an excellent job. The President thanked the Allansons for their continuing good work.

9. Newsletter report:

The Newsletter editors are Mandy Uys, Angus Patterson and Mike Silberbauer. There are two issues a year with Mandy and Angus doing the Autumn issue and Mike the Spring one. They thanked the contributors and pleaded for more contributions. They would also like feedback. They plan to publish an E-mail address list. They need to know what people are doing, their interesting findings, questions they have, humour, information on conferences, book reviews and letters to the Editor. Mandy suggested that copies could be sent to nonmembers. Dr P. Skelton suggested that membership applications be included if the newsletters are sent to nonmembers especially those outside the country.

10. Regional Representative's reports:

These reports appear elsewhere in the newsletter.

11. Congresses

11.1 1996 Congress. Mr D. Roux noted that his regional report was almost entirely devoted to the Victoria Falls conference. The three problems to be discussed were logistics, costs and the closing dates for abstracts. The costs would be R2500 at the venue which included R550 for registration. Travel costs are separate and from Johannesburg a return flight would cost R1100. Students could choose less expensive accommodation. It was agreed that the society would investigate ways to make it possible for students to attend. Dr J. Day suggested that SASAQs use some of its funds to help students. A differential rate for overseas participants could apply. Dr Day noted that if Vic. Falls is supposed to be an African conference then we must take note that the rest of Africa is poorer and this would influence their participation. The date for abstract submission had now been changed to January-February 1996.

The President thought that it was good for the society to put on a "fancier show" once every three or four years and thought that Vic. Falls should be a real success. He thanked Mr Roux for his report and the work of the organising committee and encouraged them to proceed.

11.2 1997 Congress. There was an offer by the University of Zululand to host the 1997 conference. Mr R. Owen said that they had a strong, cohesive Dept. of Zoology and that they had several positive responses to offers of sponsorship. Accommodation would not be on campus but at one of the local resorts.

12. Membership and growth of the Society

The President said that he had received a Fax from the Marine Science Society of Southern Africa (MSSSA) (Denzil Miller). Their members have been presented with three options, 1 - affiliate with another society (the Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Scientists or SASAQs); 2 - continue as a separate society; 3 - disband.

Prof. C. Buxton was representing the MSSSA and he gave a brief background. With the demise of SANCOR in 1990 the marine scientists decided that they required a society. Prof. Buxton said he was the Eastern cape chairman and noted that it had been difficult to get the society off the ground. He thought that it was logical for the MSSSA to join with SASAQs which would be to the benefit of both societies. Another possible affiliation could be SAIE but this is not a learned society. The President pointed out that there is at present no hindrance for marine scientists to join SASAQs and in fact some of them are already members. There are no constitutional implications. If in discussions with the Marine Society it was decided that there would have to be some constitutional changes then members would be balloted. Prof. B. Allanson said he supported the inclusion of the marine scientists and added that it might be wise to change the name of the journal to South African Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research which would be a wider market. The President asked if there were any objections to proceed with negotiations with the Marine Society. Dr A. Whitfield suggested that the marine scientists could be offered a reduced or free membership for one year to bring them in and make them aware of the positive benefits of belonging. The President suggested that SASAQs positively go for a merger making it attractive to the Marine Society and not prescriptive. Dr J. Day said that this would have to be discussed by the Council and that the handling of sensitive issues and membership would have to be done by post. The Council was given a mandate to proceed with negotiations. The President noted that he had to respond quickly to the points raised by Denzil Miller in his FAX.

13. The Society and the new Water Act.

The President noted that Dr C. Palmer had been nominated by the Society as our representative on the Minister's Committee to consider the response of the public to 'You and your water rights'. She will be in Pretoria for one month with this committee.

14. General.

Mr C. Benade suggested that aquatic scientists should sell themselves by attending symposia/conferences etc. organized by other disciplines such as engineers, hydrologists, etc.

Dr F. de Moor said that Prof. R. Crosskey may run a blackfly workshop in 1997 or 1998 but that this is a very specialised topic. He asked if the Society would

support this venture. Dr P. Skelton suggested that this could form part of one of the Congresses. Dr F. de Moor said that they would expect about 100 participants just for the blackfly workshop. The President said that he would talk to Dr de Moor about the involvement of the Society.

The President welcomed a new member, Mr J.O. Tetteh from the University of Swaziland.

15. Closure.

The meeting closed at 12:45.

- Jim Cambray

After a false start while the specialists got used to the vagaries of automated electronic mail systems, the afwater discussion group has got off the ground (I suppose this would be called "attaining +5 volts" in electronic terms). The purpose of this virtual watering hole is to enable discussion of anything related to water in southern Africa, and it has been set up by Arne Kure of the Computing Centre for Water research and John Carter of the Institute for Water Quality studies. All topics are fair game, including water quality, institutions, policies, persons, events and practices. As John Carter puts it, "I want to encourage relaxed, open, informal and chatty conversation. If you would like stiff, closed, formal conversation, I can always create another group..."

Discussions to date have ranged from "Is South Africa stealing Mozambique's water?" to "Affirmative action by employers of aquatic scientists."

Anyone with access to the Internet can join the discussion group by sending a message to:

majordomo@aqua.ccwr.ac.za,
with the following text in the message:
subscribe afwater
end

The list server will automatically add your address to the afwater list.

To send a message to all the people on the afwater list, use the address
afwater@aqua.ccwr.ac.za

It helps to think up a concise and descriptive subject line, so that subscribers can quickly decide whether to press READ or DELETE.

For further information, please contact John Carter at Institute for Water Quality Studies, Private Bag X313 PRETORIA 0001,
ece@dwaf-hri.pwv.gov.za,
telephone (012) 808-0374 x 194 or
fax (012) 808-0338

WHERE ARE THEY NIWR? - 2: Richard Robarts

Readers will remember Jeff Thornton's comments on life after NIWR (National Institute for Water Research, now Watertek, at CSIR). Richard Robarts offered these comments from Canada:

After I left CSIR I joined the National Hydrology Research Institute, Environment Canada in Saskatoon as a research scientist but two years later became Chief of the Environmental Sciences Division. The Division conducts research into surface water ecology and groundwater. Most of our research is in Western Canada but we also have work in the Arctic and in other countries. Most of the scientists in the Division are adjunct professors at one or more universities, mainly in Canada, and so much of our research program is maintained by graduate students. I am an adjunct professor in the Department of Applied Microbiology at the University of Saskatchewan and in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. My particular research interests these days are in microbial biogeochemical cycles in prairie saline lakes and wetlands, although I still have a project on the Eastern Mediterranean with Tamar Zohary.

In the prairie systems we have looked at phosphorus and carbon cycles and the impact of agrochemicals and most recently, the effects of UV-radiation on microbial processes. Prairie saline lakes are fascinating systems to work with. They have high DOC concentrations (20 to several hundred mg/L) and high phosphorus concentrations. The DOC is non-coloured and the inorganic chemistry is dominated by magnesium and sulphate. The DOC is low molecular weight but highly refractory and therefore old (about 700 years). It originates largely from terrestrial sources. The DOC concentration in the wetlands is also high (20 to 40 mg/L), is terrestrially derived but is highly coloured and young (post-bomb). This material is also generally low molecular weight, but higher than that in the saline lakes. It is also more labile and photolyses relatively easily compared with that in the saline systems. If you are interested in these systems, we are slowly getting our work published in a variety of journals, most recently in *Limnology and Oceanography*, vol. 40, pages 566-574.

I am a coauthor on a book on Russian wetlands plus I have a chapter to write for a book on molecular approaches to studying the sea. I also have several manuscripts sitting around in various stages of completion. What I need is time! You may be interested to know that the last paper on Hartbeespoort Dam is about to come out in *Archiv für Hydrobiologie* - it is a detailed analysis of the seven years of phytoplankton records. Tamar Zohary is the senior author.

While I have been very busy since coming to Saskatoon and I really enjoy the work I do here, I think frequently of the 14 years we spent in southern Africa and promise the kids that one day we will take them back to where they were born. I have no prediction on when that will be, although in my present position I travel extensively throughout the world (I have been to Egypt twice in the past four years and will probably go again as I was involved in designing a water quality monitoring program for the Egyptian government; I am now off to a meeting in Belem, Brazil, in the Amazon and then to Japan for two days in October!).

While we miss living in southern Africa, we are happy and prosperous in our lives in the Canadian prairies, even if the daytime high temperature does not exceed -35°C for six weeks each winter! I took six weeks leave last year and drove with my family from Saskatoon to Prince Edward Island on the east coast. That was a total of 11,129 km! A great holiday and only wish I had taken another couple of weeks...

I would enjoy hearing from old friends and colleagues. My E-mail address is Robartsr@nhrisv.nhrc.sk.doe.ca and my postal address is:

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though I am a very bad correspondent via the normal mail!

- Richard Robarts

Margalef, R (ed) (1994) *Limnology Now - A Paradigm of Planetary Problems*. Elsevier Science, Amsterdam. 572 pages hardbound. Price Dfl. 340.00 (US\$ 194.50).

I have always been of the conviction that a distinguishing mark of excellence in an environmental biologist lies in the individual's ability to intuitively assess and evaluate the problem with which he or she is confronted. As far as the science of limnology is concerned, the value of experienced understanding as a tool is embodied in texts authored by such eminent contemporary biologists such as Robert Wetzel, Brian Moss and the late G. Evelyn Hutchinson, as well as having been more directly dealt within the socioecological writings of John Cairns.

Although by no means an infant science, limnology has progressed most rapidly since the 1950s. With such hurried momentum, the need to stand momentarily still and assess the progress made arises. *Limnology Now - A Paradigm of Planetary Problems* is such a synthesis. This compilation of papers, gathered under the auspices of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), and edited by Ramon Margalef, is centred around the concept of epicontinental aquatic ecosystems as the link between terrestrial and oceanic waters. The book comprises a collage of papers which place in perspective the major problem areas confronting limnologists today. Relevant and current perceptions of the role of inland water ecosystems, interannual variability, macrophyte and phytoplankton ecology and river regulation are dealt with, along with water supply, water quality and the need for diffuse pollution control.

Although the book begins and ends strongly there are, however, the inevitable "filler chapters". In this case there is a 92-page mathematical paper on transport processes. Omission of these highly specialized chapters would, no doubt, reduce the overall printing costs of the final product, thus making it available to a wider audience without departing from the original theme. Despite the all-encompassing title, and apart from a detailed perspective on tropical South American limnology, there is little else on Southern Hemisphere ecosystems. Problems experienced in arid regions, however, are ably dealt within a chapter entitled "Parched continents, Our Common Future".

The compilation of works ends, somewhat strangely, with a chapter entitled "What is limnology?", but the penultimate contribution is, to my mind, potentially the most valuable. Here J.R. Vallentyne (Johnny Biosphere) provides a far seeing viewpoint on the biospheric approach to environmental management.

This powerful chapter is entitled "Not Politics but Ecology".

As is nowadays a common failing in scientific publications of this nature, no index has been provided. This is a serious omission, but is partially atoned for by the comprehensive Table of Contents. Warts and all, this book constitutes valuable reading for all limnologists, as well those who are peripherally-associated with research on, or management of, inland water ecosystems.

***GraphPad Prism*TM by GraphPad Software. Only available from GraphPad Software Inc, 10855 Sorrento Valley Road, Suite 203, San Diego, CA 92121 USA (telefax [09]1-619-457-8141). US\$495.00 plus \$15.00 airmail postage. A free demo is available by accessing the Prism website at <http://www.graphpad.com> and following the instructions.**

"Introducing the fastest, easiest way to analyze and graph scientific data" is the slogan that greets the reader from the cover of the glossy brochure promoting *GraphPad Prism*TM. While this statement may well be debated by those who are intimately in tune with their favourite brand of graphics software, *GraphPad Prism*TM, produced by GraphPad Software, Inc., is certainly very easy to use and unencumbered by the need for frequent and repeated forays into the weighty tomes of manuals which usually accompany software packages today. By contrast, *GraphPad Prism*TM weighs into this arena with a slim 400 gram A5-format manual of just 272 pages inclusive of a comprehensive index. The fact that the designers of the package have not needed to further the destruction of forests belies the vast number of features which have been incorporated. The programme runs under Windows 3.1 or later, and will perform happily on 386 or 486 processors, although much faster on the latter.

First and foremost, *GraphPad Prism*TM is not a spreadsheet with accompanying graphics capabilities. It is a graph plotting tool designed specifically with scientists in mind, and is aimed especially at those needing to plot biological data. Raw data entry is facilitated by a variety of entry options for Y-format values, eg from single to quintuplicate Y-values, as well as the ability to enter predetermined statistical parameters. Replicate values are automatically averaged so that the mean and standard deviation may be plotted. The program will import readily from ASCII files, but not from popular spreadsheet formats (this limitation is easily overcome). Data may be entered as 'projects', with each project file encompassing five sections containing the data, analysis results, graphics, layout

and notes. Each section can contain up to 100 sheets. It is a real pleasure to be able to collate experimental data in this fashion. Related data sets may be linked so that related data sets may be analysed simultaneously, and updated data are reanalyzed automatically, *but* this option can be 'frozen' to protect selected data. Instant (automatic) graph creation is standard, and is supported by an extremely versatile set of options for customization. The package will not accommodate the use of date (calendar) x-axis data, a drawback in many graphics programmes other than certain 'in-house' variants specifically designed for this purpose. This is a drawback when plotting, for example, time-series hydraulic data spanning lengthy periods of several years. Insertion of axis titles is dead easy, with on-screen text insertion including superscript and subscript creation and a pull-down menu for maths symbols and Greek alphabet characters.

The space available here is insufficient to fully describe the features of the *GraphPad Prism*TM package. Needless to say, the more you seek the more you find! Powerful statistical analysis capabilities (including analysis of variance) are built in, as are curve fitting parameters and data preprocessing options—the latter utilizing a suite of transformation functions. In addition to the usual x-y plots, linear-regressions, non-regressions and box-and-whisker diagrams, the software is ideally suited for plotting dose-response curves, half-life and

decay data and survival analysis. Data smoothing, theoretical curve generation as well as the option to add user-defined equations to the built-in list. An optional (on/off) prompting function assists the newcomer to the programme. Overall, *GraphPad Prism*TM would appear to be a significant advance towards giving biologists the type of graph plotting tools they really need!

NEW BOOKS IN BRIEF

Moss, B (1995) *Ecology of Freshwaters (Second Edition)*. Blackwell Science Ltd, distributed by Marston Book Services, Oxford. xiii + 417 pages softbound. Price £23.50.

An almost completely rewritten edition of this valuable text that first appeared in 1980. A must for any limnologist's bookshelf, especially at this price!

Canter-Lund, H and Lund, JWG (1995) *Freshwater Algae: Their microscopic world explored*. Biopress Ltd, Bristol. xv + 360 pages hardbound. Price £43.50 plus p&p.

A new and fascinating book which no algologist should be without!

- Bill Harding

Join *SOCIETAS INTERNATIONALIS LIMNOLOGIAE* (SIL) *Theoreticae et applicatae* International Association of Theoretical and Applied Limnology

In the previous newsletter Rob Hart, the South African representative of SIL, made a plea for someone to take over from him. Before you rush out and volunteer, you need to be a member of SIL. This involves sending \$40.00 (about R175.00, once the bank and government have extracted their portion) as your first annual subscription fee to the treasurer, who is none other than: Prof. Dr. Robert G. Wetzel, Department of Biological Sciences, The University of Alabama, TUSCALOOSA, Alabama 35487, USA. Prof. Wetzel encourages membership of SIL as an international organisation dedicated to research, communication and teaching of limnology. There is emphasis on both theory and application, as the name says, and SIL is essentially a scientific organisation, not a pressure group. The most tangible benefit of joining SIL is the receipt of the *Verhandlungen Internationale Vereinigung für theoretische und angewandte Limnologie*, a triennial leviathan amongst scientific publications that exceeds 3500 pages. Assuming a constant Rand/Dollar exchange for the next three years, the *Verhandlungen* (proceedings) for 1998 will cost you R525.00, and you will receive them in about 1999. To obtain the proceedings of the previous conference, held this year in São Paulo, it would be necessary to subscribe retrospectively for three years by sending \$120.00 to SIL. This is not meant to put off prospective members, but to emphasise that membership must be for at least three years to be beneficial.

