

## SASAQS 1997 AGM

### President's report - Jay O'Keeffe

Another successful year for the Society. Following the excitement of the conference at Vic Falls, memorable as much for the adrenalin-charged rapids of the Zambezi as for the conference itself. The conference made a profit of R22,000 and once again the Society finds itself in a happy financial position, and looking for worthwhile activities to support.

The main activity of the Society this year has once again been its involvement in the Water Law Review, through the indefatigable efforts of Tally Palmer. The Principles have now been accepted by Cabinet, the White Paper has been drafted, and also accepted, and drafting the new law is now in progress. The prominence of environmental issues in the White Paper is due in large part to the efforts of Tally and other members of the Society.

Following the acceptance of the new logo, a new set of medals have been cast, and the dyes are lodged with the National Mint - so hopefully they won't be lost as the original ones were.

Membership has increased a bit, we've got 20 new members and 1 new corporate member, while 6 members and 3 corporate members resigned. So the total is now 201 members and 38 corporate members - a stable rather than a growing society. I think we should undertake a serious membership drive, aimed primarily at students, scientists and managers who should be members but aren't, and those north of the South African borders who we haven't yet approached. A cause for concern is that the treasurer tells me that 100 members haven't paid their subs yet. Membership only costs R60, and we really shouldn't have to waste money and the valuable time of voluntary workers in chasing members for their subs. So please pay up!

Brian Allanson has done a great job in putting volume 22 of the Journal to bed, and tells me that Volume 23 is well advanced. He has asked to be relieved of the duties of Editor after 6 (??) years, and we regretfully have to honour his wishes, and thank him for yet another major contribution to the Society which he helped to found. We have started an initiative to marry the Journal to the Marine Sciences Journal. This makes sense since we are a Society of fresh and salt water, and the Marine Journal has a very efficient and professional organisation to produce it. The issues to be resolved are: the name of the joint journal; a proportion of the costs of the journal to be born by SASAQS; and members of the editorial board. We need to appoint someone to negotiate with the Marine Journal on behalf of SASAQS.

Following the new provincial boundaries, the Society's Council has amended the constitution to now include 12 regions. Braam Pieterse has agreed to be the representative for the new North West Province, and Rob Palmer, now based in White River, has agreed to represent Mpumalanga.

This is the last year of the Grahamstown crew's tenure as Council of the Society, and next year we hand over to Chris Dickens, Mark Graham and Rob Hattingh, who have agreed to form the nucleus of a new Council based in Kwazulu-Natal. Our thanks to them for their bravery! This also means that it's time to elect or re-elect the Regional Representatives and a new medals committee. In addition we'll need a volunteer to head up the editorial responsibilities for the

Journal, in whatever form that may take.

I would personally like to thank all the members of the Council , for their work and support over the past 2½ years. Tally Palmer, Patsy Goetsch, Ferdi de Moor, Helen James, Alan Whitfield, and Christopher McQuaid, in Grahamstown, have all combined to make my responsibilities much easier. The Society owes a huge debt to Bill Harding, for his continual management of the finances of the Society. He really has put the Society's finances on a sound footing, often in the face of a rather disorganised exco, and I don't know what we'd do without him. We need to find out, because we can't rely on his voluntary efforts forever, and we need to decide whether it isn't time for the Society to pay for at least a part-time financial/secretarial person. Because the other person who has been a heroine of the Society for the past 2½ years is Gay Youthed, who works for the Institute for Water Research in Grahamstown and who has taken on the secretarial leg-work - the administrative work that takes so much effort, like sending out notices to all the members.

Mandy Uys and Mike Silberbauer have continued to do a great job with the Newsletter, which is such an important medium for keeping us all up to date with the affairs of the Society.

Next year's conference will be held in Bloemfontein, thanks to Pierre de Villiers, who has bravely agreed to convene a local organising committee. In 1999 Shirley Bethune has offered to organise a conference in Namibia, hopefully in the tradition of the very enjoyable and successful event which Shirley also helped to organise in Windhoek in 1986 (??)

This is my last report as President and I would like to say how much I've enjoyed the past 2½ years. It's a responsibility and quite a lot of work to take on the presidency of SASAQS but the compensations more than make up. For me, the help and support of colleagues, the fun of the conferences and the friendship of colleagues have been more than adequate rewards. Thank you all.

**Regional report: KwaZulu-Natal**  
**Chris Dickens**

Over this past year the most dominant event for SASAQS members in the province was undoubtedly the development of the National Aquatic Ecosystems Biomonitoring Programme and its introduction to the province. Members were kept informed of developments and those expressing a desire to be more involved were brought together with a wide selection of industrial and community representatives who had a similar interest. A Provincial Implementation Team has been compiled with the responsibility of drawing up a business plan for moving the programme into operation. As this takes place there is going to be a need for a multidisciplinary input to the programme, which the members of SASAQS will be best positioned to provide.

The Zululand node of the SASAQS membership bravely accepted the task of hosting the 1997 congress. The planning was slick, the venue excellent and it was by all accounts a most successful effort.

**Regional Report: Gauteng-Northern Province-Mpumalanga**  
**Dirk Roux**

Since the 1996 Vic Fall Conference, which was organised by Gauteng members, this northern region has had a relatively dry year in terms of society activities. In a recent letter to regional members, I asked for input regarding a few specific issues. Although the response rate was too low to regard the outcome as representative, I summarise some of the feedback below.

- Members seem to agree that a representative for each of the three provinces, rather than one regional representative, would improve communication among members as well as organisation of, and participation in, local activities. Such an arrangement would, however, be subject to the availability of a representative in each of the provinces.
- At the end of my second term as regional representative I believe that it is time to have new energy and enthusiasm for this position, and I will not be available for re-election. Regional members were asked to put forward nominations for a representative to serve on the Council for the next three year term. These nominations were to be directed to the Society Secretary.
- Two interesting snippets from the activities of local members:
  - 1) Tony Turton (you may remember him from Vic Falls) has completed a Masters thesis on the *Hydropolitics of Southern Africa*. His study focused on the Zambezi Basin States and South Africa. Tony's study included the development of a model to explain the likely patterns of hydropolitical interaction within the southern African region. The model also provides a tentative explanation of behaviour within international river basin authorities.
  - 2) René Glen has been compiling a list of aquatic plants that occur in southern Africa, recording their habitats, growth form, conservation status and origin. The idea is to create a database with the mentioned information as well as salinity, ecological importance, economic attributes, control methods and current literature related to these taxa. Perhaps some of you have done similar work on aquatic fauna, or have supporting data on the aquatic plants. René would appreciate any input or suggestions and can be contacted at the National Botanical Institute in Pretoria.
- Please note apologies for Mike Silberbauer, Pete Ashton and myself at the 1997 AGM.

## Regional report: Eastern Cape Alan Whitfield

Members in this region maintained a high degree of involvement with SASAQS affairs, primarily due to the fact that the Executive Committee is currently located in Grahamstown. These activities will be outlined in the President's Report so I will restrict my comments to a few local news snippets from members at the Albany Museum, Rhodes University's Zoology Department and the J.L.B. Smith Institute of Ichthyology.

On the freshwater side, Total(SA) have partially sponsored a poster on the Albany Museum's *Save the Eastern Cape Rocky Project*. The poster depicts over 40 animals which live in the Blaaukrantz Nature on the Kowie River. Maggie Newman, the artist, did an excellent job combining both terrestrial and aquatic environments and their inhabitants, from the small aquatic invertebrates to a majestic leopard. Dr Jim Cambray, who runs the project at the museum, asked the artist to include a leopard in the painting in memory of the one that was shot in the region last year. The "stars" of the poster are the endangered fish species, the Eastern Cape Rocky (*Sandelia bainsii*), which occurs in the Kowie River. The poster is intended to be an artwork as well as informative. The posters are available from the Albany Museum at R10 which includes a brochure. Part of this money will go towards the conservation of the many species still remaining along and in the Kowie River.

Still on the threatened fishes theme, several Eastern Cape members of SASAQS featured in the Estuarine Pipefish (*Syngnathus watermeyerii*) story on TV. This endemic estuarine fish species was thought to have become extinct in recent decades but was "rediscovered" in the East Kleinemonde Estuary. The 50/50 TV programme on this event was broadcast in May 1997 and elicited a strong response from the public.

On the marine side, an important event for some of our marine members at the Department of Zoology (Rhodes University) was a highly successful research cruise to Marion Island. The objective was to carry out a large scale sampling grid around the Prince Edward Islands evaluating the distribution of zooplankton and micronekton in the context of the position of the Subantarctic Front as this is believed to have major implications for food availability for the land-based predators, especially the penguins. The physical conditions around the island were very different from previous years. In particular rainfall has decreased dramatically over the last few years. High phytoplankton productivity over the island shelf is thought to be related to fresh water run-off from the islands which is often associated with plankton blooms. There was no such bloom this year, perhaps because of reduced run-off. Community structure in the zooplankton differed markedly from last year and arrow worms, or chaetognaths, an important component of the predator guild, were especially rare.

**Regional report: Namibia**  
**Shirley Bethune**

Namibia currently has very few members and no SASAQS activities occurred during 1996/97, although a strong Namibian delegation (7 people) attended the Vic Falls conference making the strongest African representation outside SA.

On the aquatic ecology front much has been happening with attention turning to the larger shared perennial rivers, Kunene, Okavango, Zambezi and Orange. Within the National Biodiversity country report task force a wetlands working group has been formed. Emphasis in the next couple of months will be on recruiting members from the wetlands group and Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources to serve on the LOC for the 1999 Symposium, seeking sponsorship and courage.

## **Regional Report: North-West Region**

### **AJH Pieterse**

The North-West Province is part of the important mining area of South Africa, apart from being a prominent agricultural area. Headwaters of the Limpopo River comprise the north and north-west border of the province, while the Vaal River, central to South Africa's present and future development, makes up the southern border with the Free State.

All the rivers of the province and their tributaries are affected in various ways by human activities. For example, the Schoonspruit River, tributary to the Vaal, is polluted primarily by agricultural and urban development, while the Mooi River, another tributary to the Vaal, is, in addition, intensely polluted by mining activities. Serious problems exist regarding radio-active pollution and polluted source waters from dolomitic areas in the upper reaches of the Mooi River. The Wonderfontein Catchment Management Study is being planned to provide a situation analysis regarding radio-activity, slimes dams and heavy metal pollution.

Various forums or committees have been , or are in the process of being organised in the North-West Province regarding the monitoring of rivers, or for the involvement of the community in matters pertaining to the utilisation and management of rivers. The Departments of Plant and Soil Sciences and Biochemistry and Microbiology will most probably be involved with a biomonitoring programme regarding algal and bacterial parameters. The committees include the Technical Advisory Committee of Water Source Management, The Sub-Mooi River Forum, the Wonderfontein Spruit Forum and the Loopspruit Forum.

Water from the Vaal River is being used extensively for urban, industrial, mining and other purposes. The chemical and biological quality of the water are of extreme importance for the future economic development of South Africa in general, and in the catchment of the Vaal River in particular.

The ecology, i.e. interrelationships with the environment, of Vaal River phytoplankton - representing one aspect of biological quality - have been investigated since 1984 in considerable detail. Seasonal succession of algal populations and the development of algal blooms have been studied in relation to physical and chemical environmental variables - representing aspects of chemical water quality.

Chemical, physical and biological conditions within a source-water affect the treatment processes of water within treatment plants in an interrelational way. In addition, although conditions within the treatment plant may be unfavourable for growth and photosynthesis of many algae, growth and photosynthesis of some are stimulated, making them able to penetrate the different phases of purification and to be present in the treated water.

Various expertise and facilities exist in the North-West Province that can be utilised in the monitoring, utilisation and management of the rivers of the province, including the Vaal River.

All scientists and other persons with interests in the aquatic environment of the North-West Province, will be contacted during 1997-1998 and a regional committee for SASAQS will be

organised. Normal regional activities should begin directly thereafter.



**Editor's Report**  
**Brian Allanson**

The delay in the publication of volume 22 has been occasioned, I regret to say, by the editorial team being overwhelmed by the need to complete their assemblage of a new volume on the Estuaries of South Africa for Cambridge University Press. This task and the preparation of the camera-ready copy of volume 22 coincided. I leave the rest to your imagination!

Notwithstanding, I am most grateful for the increased flow of good papers and I hope that readers will find something of specific interest in both volume 22 which has gone to press and volume 23 which will go to press in August. When volume 23 has been published we will be in phase with the year, 1997.

It is most unfortunate that the Victoria Fall Conference has yielded so few papers. Members may remember that it was the intention to publish in a symposium format many of the papers which were presented at this meeting. I fear the road to Hell is paved with good intentions and colleagues who thought they would be able to make the deadline were unable to. Nevertheless there were a few stalwart souls and we have considered each contribution as a normal paper to the journal, namely they have been subject to peer review. The accepted papers will appear in volume 23.

Professor Rob Hart has drawn my attention to a new "Impact Factor" (IF) which is apparently rampant among the journals of South Africa. Do I get a hint of yet another ranking device to tell us how supposedly bad or good we are? It would appear that the SA J Aquatic Sciences has a significantly lower IF than Water SA - hardly comparable journals considering the strong technological bias in Water SA. Furthermore, we are a Journal without outside financial assistance: the members fees and what we save from our annual symposia have allowed us to continue publication over these many years. But this is insufficient cause for us to become complacent and it's for this reason that I would urge the Society to take advantage of Internet.

An important advance with respect to wider circulation of the journal and its contents must be the World Wide Web. Marcus Wishart of the Freshwater Ecology Unit has been investigating the potential of the Internet as such a medium. His research is positive and I recommend that we give him the go ahead to post the journal as it presently exists on the WWW and that at least, initially, it be freely available and that no charges be put in place, subject to the review and approval of the executive committee.

Members will appreciate that this is only one of the ways in which our work will get known internationally. The role of the abstracting journals is still important. It is incumbent upon the Journal Secretary that these important contacts are reviewed from time to time. In this regard I appreciate the effort of Helen James and Ferdie de Moor who maintain the necessary contact.

Finally, I have decided to retire as editor. It is time a younger person with new vision took over. I have informed the President and he appreciates my other reason that it really is time Sue and I were able to smell the roses without worrying about what was left undone by our doing so. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to continue the development of the journal.

The spectrum of subject matter received for review over the years has been wide and I hope that this editorial policy will be continued by the next editor. However, following a request from the executive committee, I have had discussions with the editor, Dr Stan Pillar of the SA J of Marine Science. Both he and Andy Paine are interested in a possible merger of these two journals to create a Southern African Journal of Marine and Freshwater Science. This would be an exciting and challenging development in the journal's history which would continue to require the skills and tact of a dedicated editor.

## SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY OF AQUATIC SCIENTISTS

Report of the Honorary Treasurer to the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Society, held at Mtunzini, KwaZulu-Natal, June 1997.

Annual Financial Report for the Financial Year ending 31 December 1997.

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Dear Colleagues,

You have before you copies of the audited financial statements of the Society for the 1996 financial year. It is with pleasure that I can once again report on a stable financial year for your Society, during which the overall financial position continued to show growth of R21 000.00. While subscription income declined with respect to 1995, interest earned, together with a surplus from the 1996 congress in Zimbabwe supported this growth. The financial development of the Society continued in the absence of any increase in subscription rates.

During 1996 the Society employed funds towards the acquisition of office equipment, and some R10 000.00 for bursaries supporting attendance at the 1996 congress. Other expense items remained within typical ranges.

I was unable to attend the Annual General Meetings of the Society during 1995 and 1996. I note, however, from the minutes of these gatherings, that there has been some discussion concerning the way in which the accumulated funds of the Society should be employed. I should like to take this opportunity of providing you with some background as to the reasoning underlying the financial development of SASAQS. During 1993, and following the highly-successful Cape Town conference, the Cape Town Executive decided financial development should be focussed towards enabling the Society to show a greater degree of independence, and less reliance on facilities and equipment made available by the employers of the incumbent members of EXCO. In addition, a decision was made that capital growth should be sustained until such time that the annual interest earning would support the production of a second edition of the Society journal per financial year. Publication and mailing of a single issue of our journal costs in the region of R10 000 per print run of 500 copies. Lastly, the financial records, accounting and invoicing procedures were to be computerized. This is an ongoing process carried out in close consultation with the Society's auditors.

I have included a graph which shows the financial position of the Society, where records exist, for the period 1972 to 1996. The target growth level of R100 000 was reached during 1995, allowing the Society to purchase some fundamental items of office equipment and support the issuing of bursaries for conference attendance and/or travel costs. SASAQS has, therefore, attained its primary goal of financial stability, and this only seven years after the records showed a net loss for the 1990 financial year. The need to increase annual subscriptions, or the registration fees for locally-held annual meetings of the Society, has not arisen for several years. I would suggest that it would be prudent for the current and future Executives of the Society to apply the accumulated funds in such a manner as to meaningfully advance the interests of the Society, whilst retaining the present level of financial stability.

**William R. Harding - Honorary Treasurer**