



2009 SAAB President's report

1. Council Matters

The 2009 council consisted of:

Prof J Farrant (President)
Prof KJ Esler (Vice-President)
Prof GF Smith (SANBI Nominee)
Prof GM van Rooyen
Dr N Makunga
Dr C Bredenkamp
Dr S Siebert
Dr L Dreyer
Ms Marianne le Roux (Student President)

Ex Officio Members

Dr Quenton Kritzingar - Honorary Treasurer

Permanent Secretary

Dr Marianna Smith (resigned and duty completed on 30 September, 2009)
Mr Myke Scott (appointed October, 2009)

2. SAAB Student Council

The newly appointed Council for 2010 were
Marianne le Roux (President)
Lubaine Essack (Vice President)
Helen Curran (Secretary)
Kushmika Singh
Driaan Bester

A SAAB student Facebook page (www.facebook.com, group name: SAAB Student Council) was set up by the Council, in which a number of student and academic groups were established. The site is linked to the SAAB web page and information on bursaries and up-and-coming events were regularly published to this site.

Student member, Kush Singh facilitated the opportunity for SAAB students to submit and publish Science popular articles. *Veld and Flora* agreed to publish selected articles.

3. SAAB Conferences

The 35th Annual Conference of the South African Association of Botanists (SAAB) together with an international workshop on "Phosphate as a limiting resource" was hosted by the Departments of Botany & Zoology and Conservation Ecology & Entomology at Stellenbosch University from 19 to 22 January 2009. The theme of the congress was "From molecules to mountains: spanning the organizational hierarchy". The then President of SAAB, Prof Karen Esler was the Conference Organizer and was ably assisted by an efficient Committee, the *ex-officio* treasurer being Myke Scott, who is now the SAAB Secretary. The conference was a great

success, with a broad range of subject matters and disciplines being covered. There were 8 Invited Plenary speakers, 5 International and 3 Local, which set an intellectually stimulating start to the conference.

The combined Annual Conference of the Soil Science Society of South Africa, South African Society for Crop Production, Southern African Weed Science Society and Southern African Society for Horticultural Sciences was held at Stellenbosch University simultaneously with the SAAB conference and our delegates were able to attend sessions from that conference and interact with delegates from those sister societies.

The 36th Annual Conference of the South African Association of Botanists together with a workshop on the “Bayesian Statistical Approach in Ecological Studies” will be hosted by the School of Environmental Sciences and Development at North-West University from 11 to 13th January 2010. The theme of the congress is “*Applications of plant science: from natural to human environments*”.

Rhodes University will host the next meeting in 2011.

4. SAABnet

SAABnet was efficiently run by the combined team of Prof. Karen Esler, who circulated communications and Dr Quenton Kritzing, who maintains the list of 400+ subscribers. My sincere thanks go to them for the sleek operation of this network.

5. South African Journal of Botany (SAJBot)

The impact factor for SAJBot increased from 0.44 in 2008 to 1.113 in 2009. The Editor-in-Chief, Prof Hannes van Staden is congratulated for this accomplishment, true to his predictions in his report to the SAAB AGM in January 2009.

6. Web site

Our new web site www.sabotany.com went active in 2009. Richard Thompson (Stellenbosch University) is thanked for his assistance in compiling and managing the web page.

7. SAAB Bursaries

Two Honours (or equivalent 4th year level) scholarships of R10 000 each were awarded in 2009 to students in the Plant Sciences whose supervisors are paid up members of SAAB.

Matthys Strydom (University of Stellenbosch) is a Conservation Ecology student, interested in how invasive species impact the flora of the fynbos biome.

Janneke van der Hout (University of Pretoria) is an Honours Student in Medical Plant Science. Her interests lie in the medicinal uses of local flora and in particular how these could play a role in pharmaceutical developments.

The call for applicants is relayed via SAAB net and the deadline is 15 February.

8. Congratulating students who graduated

As has been the policy of SAAB in recent years, MSc and PhD students who graduated during 2009 received personal letters congratulating them and inviting them to become/remain SAAB members. Dr Stefan Siebert is thanked for his role in continuing the facilitation of this process.

9. Membership

Membership

The following table provides comparative information on membership as of December 2009 with that in December 2008.

Member type	Active members		Inactive members		Total members	
	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
Ordinary[ORD]	193	187	2	2	195	189
Student[STD]	71	49	0	0	71	49
Retired[RTD]	10	7	0	0	10	7
Affiliate[AFF]	10	5	0	0	10	5
Family[FAM]	5	5	0	0	5	5
Honorary[HON]	24	24	0	0	24	24
Institute[INST]	5	5	0	0	5	5
Life[LIFE]	7	7	1	1	8	8
Total	260	289	3	3	263	292

Membership dropped 11% from 2008 to 2009.

10. Finances

I will present the financial report on behalf of the honorary treasurer, Dr Kritzinger. Any queries can be made to him directly via email on quenton.kritzinger@up.ac.za. As was reported in previous years, income from membership fees and journal subscriptions are not considerable and certainly do not cover our expenses. Indeed, despite termination of membership of those who have been in arrears for more than two years (see Presidents report 2008), there continues to be membership dept (R14 320, with 90 members being in arrears in December 2009) due to non payment of fees. I urge members to be vigilant in paying their fees. Overall, however, due to continued contributions from Elsevier, our nett financial standing is good, with total available funds at the end of 2009 being R729 506. My sincere thanks to Dr Kritzinger for his *pro-bono* service as treasurer of SAAB.

11. Awards

It is a pleasure to announce that the SAAB Silver medal for Botany will be awarded this year to **Dr Marion Meyer** (University of Pretoria) and the Bronze medal to **Dr Alistair McCormick** (PhD obtained from University of KwaZulu Natal). The adjudication panel for the Bronze medal comprised the members of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of the 36th Annual SAAB Conference, held at North West University. Thanks go to the Conference Organizer, Dr Stefan Siebert and his LOC.

12. SACNASP

I include this item as reminder, raised in last year's Presidents report, that in terms of sections 18(2) and 20(1) of the Natural Scientific Professions Act, 2003, professional registration of all practicing and consulting natural scientists is compulsory. SAAB members who consult should apply for professional registration to protect themselves against the risk of transgressing the act.

14. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Prof. Karen Esler for her help as support in my first year as President of the Society and to Dr Mariana Smith and Mr Myke Scott for their secretarial services during the year. On behalf of the Society I would like to thank Dr Smith for 10 invaluable years of service to SAAB and wish her well in her future ventures.

Jill M. Farrant
President of SAAB
11 January 2010