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NEWS-LETTER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOTANISTS
NUUSBRIEF VAN DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE GENOOTSAP VAN PLANTKUNDIGES

PROF. WILLEM JAN LÜTJEHARMS: With the passing of Willem Jan Lütjeharms on 3 February 1983, many hundreds of his former students have lost a beloved and wise teacher, a mentor, friend and counsellor. His final terminal illness was dealt with as everything else in his life, thoroughly scientifically and with dignity, and his last days were spent peacefully at his home, Ann Arbor, Rondebosch, with his family close at all times.

A full obituary for publication in the Journal of South African Botany, will be written by others, and I will therefore confine myself to personal reminiscences.

Born in Alkmaar in the Netherlands on 24 January 1907, Professor Lütjeharms completed his doctorate under Professor L.G.M. Baas Becking at the Rijks University in Leiden. Baas Becking had earlier been associated with Dr. M.W. Beijerinck of Delft, one of the moving figures in the golden age of microbiology round the turn of the century. The names of these two Dutch scientists became fixed in my mind in my student days in the 1940's; frequently Beijerinck's famous words "Everything is everywhere but the environment selects" (purported to have been made with reference to the Mucorales) were used when discussing distribution of plants and especially the fungi.

A deeply, but unobtrusively, religious man, Professor Lütjeharms was a born teacher, very widely read with a keen feeling for the importance of history of scientific thought and concepts; and like a true teacher was always ready to impart his knowledge and share his ideas. Professor Lütjeharms had a magnificent and catholic library. Many of his students, like myself, spent many hours pouring over the precious tomes, always being encouraged to read widely around a subject and not only about it. The value of reference libraries and appreciation of fine books is something that he undoubtedly passed on to those students who were receptive.

I wonder how many were introduced to the principles of classification by being given an old beautifully leather-bound copy of Linneaus' Philisophia botanica

to read (quite a challenge to those with no Latin) and learn that "stones grow, plants grow and live, animals grow, live and feel". What fun it was to learn from this source of the genus Chaos species chaos, fungorum or infusorium. I'm sure Professor Lütjeharms was well aware how this sort of exposure stimulated interest in further reading and study. The wealth of reading and reference material which came from his personal library seemed never ending; a budding enthusiastic microbiologist was given Sinclair Lewis' Martin Arrowsmith to read, the feminist Eve Curie's Madame Curie. Strange how so many of these were eventually purchased for my own library!

After completion of his monumental doctoral dissertation Zur Geschichte der Mykologie Das XVIII Jahrhundert in 1936, and a short period in the herbarium at the University of Leiden, Lütjeharms went to a curatorship in the herbarium in the Hortus Bogoriensis (= Buitensorg) in Java. In 1937 the Lütjeharms family immigrated to South Africa where he took up the post of head of the Botany Department at the University College of the Orange Free State, succeeding the late Professor G. Potts. Lütjeharms remained in Bloemfontein until 1962 when he became the Harry Bolus Professor and Head of the Botany Department at the University of Cape Town following the resignation of Edwyn Isaac. Professor Lütjeharms filled this post with distinction until 1970 when he retired. In 1971 he was reappointed as the first Professor of Microbiology at the University of Cape Town until his final retirement in 1972.

Professor Lütjeharms had the natural gift, the wisdom and breadth of knowledge to inspire students with an appreciation of natural history, the whole organism (both micro and macro), its structure and function as well as the ecological interaction of organisms and their interdependence.

Soon after his arrival in South Africa Professor Lütjeharms saw the need for the teaching of microbiology within the science faculties at universities. Up to this time microbiology and bacteriology in particular, had always been compartmentalised into medical schools for medical students, completely overlooking the importance of industrial and agricultural microbiology. In 1951 the Senate of the U.C.O.F.S. in their wisdom allowed Professor Lütjeharms to run a one year course in microbiology which would not be recognised with the degree structure, but for which a duly performed certificate would be issued. I was at the time Professor Lütjeharms' C.S.I.R. assistant and had the privilege of assisting with and running the practicals for this course which soon became formally accepted into the science faculty curriculum as a full course. Of those first five students it is interesting to note that one in due course became a Professor of Microbiology. Once at the University of

Cape Town Lütjeharms again pushed for microbiology as an accepted subject in the science faculty where it eventually became a two year major with himself as the first head of department.

Professor Lütjeharms in his quiet way was a firm and staunch believer in the importance of professional societies and the role they have to play. In 1951 he persuaded me to join the S2A3 and over the next 25 or more years I benefited enormously from the cross and interdisciplinary contact provided by the wonderful annual congresses which, alas, are no more. Lütjeharms played an important role over many years in the S2A3 on the Council and at the scientific level in Sections B (Botany) and C (Agriculture). Likewise over many years he played a leading and important role in the Royal Society of South Africa of which he was a Fellow, a member of Council and President from 1966-1967. After the formation of the South African Association of Botanists in 1970 he from the outset played an active part serving a number of terms on the Council.

Plant galls were a lifelong interest of Lütjeharms and he assembled an impressive collection which is housed in the Botany Department at the University of Cape Town - he had hoped to work on these during his retirement.

He is survived by his widow Anna-Marie, a son, Dr. Johan Lütjeharms, and a daughter, Mrs. Marijke Haarhoff, as well as by his grandchildren who were so dear to him. (Enid P. du Plessis).

9TH ANNUAL CONGRESS OF S.A.A.B.: The 1983 Congress was held at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, from Tuesday 18th - Friday 21st January. Delegates were accommodated in Sunnyside Residence (Isabel Dalrymple House). Unfortunately it was not possible to hold the Congress in the new Oppenheimer Life Sciences Building as planned. The Opening Address was given by Dr. C.F. Garbers, President of the C.S.I.R. who stressed the role of Botanists in the future of South Africa. Inputs will be required from Botanists to guide efforts in reconciling effective use of our resources with the required preservation of the environment. Botanists have an obligation to constantly monitor the system and to provide practical solutions to the problems. Because of personal reasons, the invited guest speaker, Prof. J.L. Harper (University College of North Wales, Bangor), was prevented from coming to South Africa. Prof. Brian Walker, Chairman of the Congress Organizing Committee, was able to obtain the help of Dr. Graham Harrington, C.S.I.R.O., Australia, at very short notice. Since the main theme of this Congress was "Plant Population Biology", the title of his well-illustrated

keynote address was "Current thinking on Plant Population Dynamics in Arid Zone Management in Australia". Two parallel sessions were held almost throughout the whole Congress with about 80 oral papers and about 20 poster papers covering Population Ecology, Anatomy, Physiology, Ecology, Mycology, Aquatic Botany and Taxonomy, while a Wood Anatomy Workshop was also held. The summaries of papers delivered at this congress will be published in the July issue of the "South African Journal of Botany", while a report on the congress will appear in the "South African Journal of Science".

The Annual General Meeting of S.A.A.B. was held on the Friday at 16h00 when the new Council was announced. The President, Prof. J.H. Visser, Treasurer, Dr. J.H. Jooste (both from the Botany Department, University of Stellenbosch) and Secretary, Mr. C. Boucher (Botanical Research Unit, P.O. Box 471, Stellenbosch) will hold office for 1983/84. Members in their first year are Prof. J.G.C. Small (Past President), Proff. C.F. Cresswell, J.N. Eloff (O.F.S.), N. Grobbelaar, R.N. Pienaar (Vice-President) and Dr. J.C. Scheepers. Members in their second year are Dr. B. de Winter, Proff. O.A.M. Lewis, G.K. Theron, J.J.A. van der Walt (S.W. Cape, Vice-President), Dr. G.E. Gibbs Russell (Northern Transvaal) and Dr. R. Lubke (Eastern Cape). The 1984 Congress will be held at the University of Cape Town, the 1985 Congress at the University of Potchefstroom and the 1986 Congress at the University of the Western Cape. The following Trustees of the S.A.A.B. Trust Fund were appointed for the next 3 years: Proff. C.F. Cresswell, O.A.M. Lewis, K. Pienaar, J.J.P. van Wyk, J.H. Visser and Dr. P.D.F. Kok. The S.A.A.B. Constitution was amended so that Universities may submit more than one thesis for the S,A,A,B, Junior (Bronze) Medal for Botany and also, that in exceptional circumstances, more than one medal may be awarded per year.

Delegates to the Congress had ample opportunity to relax and meet socially. An informal pre-Congress reception was held at Sunnyside Residence on Monday night. There was a chance to experience the hospitality of the Roodepoort Town Council at a braai on Tuesday when the new Roodepoort Botanic Garden with its picturesque Witpoortjie waterfall was visited. On Wednesday night there was a choice between a theatre performance ("Under Milkwood") and a most enjoyable and somewhat boisterous dinner at the "medieval" restaurant "Green=sleeves". The University Reception took place on the campus on Thursday night. The most important social event was the Annual S.A.A.B. Dinner which was held at the Students' Union on Friday night. The guest speaker on this occasion was Mr. James Clark, journalist well-known for his concern with Nature Conservation and the Environment. The S.A.A.B. Senior (Silver) Medal for Botany was presented to Mrs. A.A. Mauve (Botanical Research Institute,

Pretoria), while Miss M. Gunn (former Librarian at the same Institute) received the S.A.A.B. Certificate of Merit. The prizes for the best student papers at the Congress were awarded to Dr. A.B. Keegan (Poster Paper "Germination of Ricinodendron rautanenii seeds"), and Mr. F.C. Botha (Oral paper "Die Invloed van waterspanning op sekere aspekte van die koolhidraat- en lipied=metabolisme van Citrullus lanatus-sade") and Dr. T. Lowrey (Oral paper "Morphological Diversity versus Genetic Diversity in an Insular Genus - An analysis of Tetramolopium (Compositae-Asteraceae) in the Hawaiian Islands"). It was also announced that Prof. J. van Staden won the Kirstenbosch Jubilee Prize for 1982, enabling him to do more research on South Africa's indigenous flora. Every guest at this dinner received an engraved wine glass serving as a memento of this successful Congress which proved stimulating and enjoyable to everyone. Thanks are due to the University of the Witwatersrand and especially the local Organizing Committee (Chairman, Prof. B.H. Walker and Secretary, Mrs. M. Wolfson) for their hard work. (W.G. Welman).

S.A.A.B. POST-CONGRESS EXCURSION: Delegates who for one reason or another did not participate in this 3 - 4 day excursion to Toowoomba, Thabazimbi, Kransberg, Pilanesberg and Sun City should kick themselves. I rate it as one of the very few short motorised safaris in thirty-odd years of African experience which was an unqualified success.

Thanks to sterling work by Messrs. Grossman and Peddie, and the co-operation of farmers and game wardens and a bevy of Sun City beauties, the small but very élite party had a whale of a time; even the cascade of silver (or cupro-nickel) into the one-armed bandits did not dampen spirits. Weather, roads, vehicle, flora, animals, food and the organisation of Mr. Sol Kerzner all conspired to smile on the delegates.

The Kransberg was a dream-world; flowers in profusion and the most westerly station of Widdringtonia and Podocarpus falcatus in the Transvaal. The new road to the transmitting station has made easily accessible an area which has probably not been adequately collected since the days of Codd and Dyer. There is scope here for orchid lovers and the composites are legion.

The Pilanesberg is one of the pleasantest game reserves (read absence of tourists and accompanying litter) with wonderful vistas, an enviable range of habitat and the rare endemic shrub Erythrophysa with its beautiful inflated fruit.

The incomparable hospitality of the Trollope's at Brakvlei kept us there until nearly midnight. We saw a spectacular range of Acacias, marvellous bee-eaters

but missed out on an enormous Dioscorea and settled for some vigorous Urera tenax instead!

Sun City welcomed us, if not exactly with open arms certainly with an illuminated sign stretched across the entrance 'Sun City Welcomes South African Botanists'. What Reception thought of the half-a-dozen travel-stained individuals instead of the couple of dozen anticipated, is best left to the imagination. Probably that botany is a dying profession! I am sure Toowoomba did not get that impression, where the officer in charge gave us a good work-out on the series of grazing and burning plots maintained there since the early thirties.

And so home in companionable peace. I could not have wished for nicer people to take around. We all learnt a great deal, saw new sights and many, many new plants and, I hope, made lots of friends. In the spirit of Catullus, 'Ave atque Vale'. (B.W.)

BOTANICAL ARTISTS: Over the years, Dr. Killick and other members of the Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria, have gathered biographical data on Botanical Artists of South Africa, both past and present. The time has come to collate this information with a view to a definitive publication on the historical development of botanical illustration as well as a dictionary of botanical artists. Rosemary Holcroft, present artist at the Institute in Pretoria, has been given this official project to complete. In order to update the data, a questionnaire will be sent to all botanical artists in Southern Africa, known to the Institute, who appeals to all persons concerned for support and co-operation.

SYMPOSIUM ON SANDY BEACHES AS ECOSYSTEMS: During January 1983 a congress at Port Elizabeth entitled 'An International Symposium on Sandy Beaches as Ecosystems' was organized by SANCOR with support from SCOR, CSIR, UPE and DEA and was chaired by Prof. T. Erasmus from UPE.

The following were the main topics of discussion:

1. Physical aspects, including sedimentation, water movement and wave movement.
2. Chemical aspects, including nutrient cycles.
3. Ecology, including food chains and population dynamics.
4. Ecophysiology and Autecology, including respiratory and other physiological adaptations.
5. Management, including conservation and utilization.

In general, this symposium was very interesting and gave an insight into the functioning of sandy beaches and near-shore ecosystems. As is often the case when ecosystems are discussed at this level, plants generally do not feature. Phytoplankton in the surf zone was discussed at some length while A.V. Quinlan and R.T. Wilce read papers on the habitat and population characteristics respectively of Pilayella littoralis, an alga which causes numerous problems at Nabant Bay, U.S.A. A number of papers were also read by the members of the University of Cape Town Zoology Department concerning the role of algal wracks in the nutrition of sandy beaches in the western Cape.

Apart from management, higher plants were only discussed during one paper presented by N.W. Pammenter from Natal University. He discussed some of the ecophysiological problems faced by Scaevola thunbergii and some of the incongruities noticed in its behaviour.

In the section 'Management', numerous papers discussed the role of plants in the beach ecosystem. The role of coastal reserves was elucidated by G.A. Robinson while R.E. Randall emphasized the need to conserve and protect the Machair beaches of Scotland. P.J. Weisser gave an excellent account of dune advancement at Mtunzini from 1937 to 1977 while D.E. Tsuriel briefly elucidated some of the techniques used in Israel for stabilizing coastal dunes.

From listening to the papers presented at this symposium, it is obvious that tremendous strides have been made world-wide, with UPE as one of the leading institutions, to further the understanding of the functioning and structure of sandy beach and near shore ecosystems. Nevertheless, there are many areas where much study is still required.

Excursions included tours to the Van Staden's Nature Reserve and the Addo National Elephant Park while coastal flights could be arranged. An opportunity was taken to observe dune stabilization and alien removal techniques in the Alexandria dune fields.

The symposium and catering were exceptionally well organized and a merry time was had by all at the social functions where numerous contacts were made. (M. O'Callaghan).

FLORA 1983 - 26, 27, 28 AUGUST 1983, GOOD HOPE CENTRE, CAPE TOWN: South Africa has an incredibly rich floral heritage - yet very little is protected and much is threatened.

1983 is the International Year of the Plant. Three organisations, the National Botanical Gardens, Southern African Nature Foundation and Botanical Society,

are organising the country's biggest ever wild flower show. This will demonstrate our floral wealth and introduce the public to the necessity of plant conservation as the basis for all conservation efforts. The theme of the show is "Conservation through Education".

Although the aim will be to show the national plant wealth, with contributions from all over the country, the main emphasis will be the Cape Floral Kingdom. This will include a landscaped display by Kirstenbosch, as well as a combined presentation by seven of the Cape's main floral regions. Major exhibitions will also be contributed by the Cape Town City Council, the Provincial Departments of Nature Conservation, Escom, South African Transport Services, and other organisations and societies.

A major highlight of the show will be a display by Pam Simcocks, who arranged the award-winning S.A. flower displays at the Chelsea and Southport Flower Shows in England.

There will also be a hall of arrangements by Saflora.

In addition to the Good Hope Centre display, Flora '83 will also include art exhibitions, a stamp show, audio visual programs and a lecture series organised by the Botanical Society and University of Cape Town.

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EDITOR/REDAKSIE

Mr. E.G.H. Oliver
Botanical Research Unit
P.O. Box 471
7600 STELLENBOSCH.