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

CONTENTS/INHOUD

| | |
|--|----|
| Endoliths and Weathering | 29 |
| In Memoriam R.G. Strey | 30 |
| Minutes of SAAB AGM 1989 | 32 |
| Resolution for Support of FSA | 36 |
| Secondary Education in Botany | 37 |
| News from the BRI | 39 |
| Habitat Council Report for 1988 | 40 |
| S.A. Syntaxonomic Nomenclature Committee | 40 |

ENDOLITHS AND WEATHERING

A conference entitled 'Endoliths and Weathering' will be held in South Africa during the period 4 - 10 March 1990. The primary aim of the congress is to promote and create awareness of ongoing research on endolithic microorganisms and the role these organisms play in the biological weathering of substrates. All lichenologists, phycologists and microbiologists who specialize in the fields of morphology, physiology, ecology, chemistry and taxonomy of endolithic microorganisms are invited to attend the conference.

The conference will be held at Berg-en-Dal in the Kruger National Park. The rest camp offers a conference centre which can accommodate 100 participants, a restaurant and a swimming pool. Participants will be accommodated in two-bed huts in the rest camp. Animal viewing trips are planned to provide breaks in the scientific programme. A field excursion, which will take place after the congress, is planned.

Further information can be obtained from: Dirk Wessels, Department of Botany, University of the North, Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, Republic of South Africa.

IN MEMORIAM R.G. STREY, 1907 - 1988

Rudolf Georg Strey was born in Templin in the Uckermark region, Germany, on the 28th April 1907. He completed his schooling at the Uckermärkische Real-Pro Gymnasium, in Angermünde, in 1923. In 1927-1928 he went to an agricultural college in Potsdam, and qualified with the diploma 'Staatlich geprüfter Landwirt'. Owing to the depression and poor prospects in Germany, Strey sailed for Cape Town and arrived in South West Africa in October 1929. In 1930, he bought the farm Buellspoort, District Rehoboth, near the Naukluftberge.

Strey developed an interest in botany because, as a farmer, he wanted to know the plants that were either palatable or poisonous to his stock. As there was little literature available he made efforts to consult various botanists. Dinter visited him at Buellspoort and he also met Prof. O.H. Volk and E.B. Schoenfelder. In 1940 Strey was interned, eventually at the Andalusia Internment Camp in the northern Cape. A number of visiting German botanists were also caught by the war, and Prof. Volk, Dr Mueller-Stoll, Dr Rehm and Dr Cloos started a University-type botany course in the camp. Lectures on poisonous plants, ecology, pasture management and indigenous fodder plants were also offered. Strey built up a new Index of SWA plants, at the suggestion of Prof. Volk.

After internment he was released to Stellenbosch where he stayed for a few months with H. Herre, who had resumed curatorship of the Stellenbosch University Botanic Garden. Strey worked at the gardens and in the herbarium of the University with Dr Rehm. At the end of November 1946 he returned to Buellspoort, but gave up farming. He started collecting from all parts of the country, sending his plants for identification to Kew, Munich, Kirstenbosch and Pretoria. Bulbs, seeds and succulents were sent to Herre in Stellenbosch. Buellspoort became a well known type locality for plants and insects. Strey was a keen insect collector, and he also collected fungi which are mainly deposited in PREM.

He continued compiling the indexes of SWA collectors, literature, place names and maps, but his chief interest between 1947 and

1952 was archaeology. This was principally because of his association with the renowned Abbé H. Breuil, who made three important trips to SWA between 1947 and 1950, which Strey guided and helped to organize. Strey also led an expedition to the Okavango with Dr Gusinde from America, in 1950, to study the Taung bushman tribe. His collections of rock paintings, stone implements and other museum pieces are housed in the Windhoek Museum, the Swakopmund Museum and in the archaeological collections of the Witwatersrand University. Strey sold the farm Buellspoort in 1950, and he travelled and organized expeditions until going up to Pretoria in 1953.

On 17 February 1955 Strey was appointed as a technician to the Botanical Research Institute in Pretoria, to work in the National Herbarium. In 1961 he produced a manuscript on 'Two hundred years of Botanical Research in South West Africa' which was the culmination of his earlier research. This gives an outline of the history of botany in SWA, divided up into periods, with the main collectors listed and the herbaria in which the collections are housed. The literature of special interest to SWA botany is also recorded. He worked in Pretoria for seven years. In April 1962 he was transferred to the Natal Herbarium in Durban where he became curator and later officer-in-charge of the Botanical Research Unit.

His years in Natal marked the scientifically most active phase of his career. He revitalized and re-organized the Natal Herbarium, building up a fine museum with early memorabilia from Medley Wood, and his own collections of insects, wood, fruit and seeds. Strey developed the herbarium garden, planting large numbers of rare Natal plants. He realized that before Bews's The Flora of Natal and Zululand (1921) could be revised, a considerable amount of collecting was necessary to fill in the gaps. He collected from as wide an area as possible since many species were known from only a few specimens. Reference to Ross's Flora of Natal (1972) bears witness to the effective and untiring work of this dedicated collector. Strey also made a point of visiting type localities of rare or once-collected Natal plants. He concentrated particularly on the rich flora of the sandstone areas of southern Natal and Pondoland, with its many endemic species.

His earliest research at the Natal Herbarium, concerned the genus Dietes in 1965. He took considerable interest in palms, particularly Hyphaene and Raphia. Strey developed a great interest in the family Araliaceae and his intensive research on Cussonia gave rise to a number of publications. Besides his published research, Strey built up very comprehensive biographical notes on early Natal botanical collectors, in particular M.J. McKen, J. Medley Wood and Wilhelm Keit. He was commemorated in several plant species names as well as a number of beetle and moth names.

Strey retired at the end of April 1972, but was re-employed for a further three years, until the end of 1975, before retiring permanently. He died on the 30th June 1988.

B. Schrire & W.G. Welman

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION WHICH
TOOK PLACE ON 13 JANUARY 1989 IN HALL 4.5 EDUCATION/LAW BUILDING,
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA AT 16h00**

1. WELCOME

Prof. Lubke opened the meeting and introduced Prof. V. Pretorius, President of SACNAS, who had agreed to address the meeting.

2. SACNAS

Prof. Pretorius described the history of scientific societies in South Africa. In contrast to the medical and engineering professions, the natural scientists had created five societies. It was decided to amalgamate these societies into one official mouth piece with the formation of SACNAS. Prof. Pretorius reported that progress has been very slow and early gains were too optimistic. It had taken the other professions 60 years to achieve their status, and results. Prof. Pretorius outlined the policies of SACNAS:

1. It does not wish to usurp the activities of the learned societies.
2. It must concentrate its efforts on Tertiary Education, particularly the maintenance of standards in natural science departments at universities.
3. SACNAS will not get involved with salary negotiations on behalf of the natural scientists.

4. It is mainly concerned with the profession with its principal function being to rationalize and organize. "What are the natural sources?". 170 sub-divisions have been recognized.
5. A deadlock has existed between SACNAS and the committee of university principals. The issue has now been resolved with RAU requesting an inspection of their science Faculty.

3. MEMBERS PRESENT AND APOLOGIES

There were 94 members present, with 18 apologies. The attendance register appears in the minute book.

4. READING AND SIGNING OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The minutes of the previous meeting, which had been published in Forum Botanicum, were taken as read, and were approved without amendments.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

5.1 Permanent Secretariat. The possibilities are still being investigated.

5.2 Advertising of special courses at S.A. Universities which may be of interest to other universities. This was suggested by the Education Committee in an effort to better utilize academic resources in the country. There has been some response to the advertisement of courses in Forum Botanicum during 1988, but more would be welcomed.

6. REPORTS

6.1 **President.** Prof. Lubke read selected items from his report, which will be published in Forum Botanicum. The Senior Medal for Botany would be awarded to Dr J.A. Coetzee during the dinner. He expressed appreciation to all those involved in the adjudication of the NBG prize and the Junior Medal for Botany which had been awarded to Dr J.J. Midgley. Honorary Secretary to write thank you letters to Prof. P. Berjak for co-ordinating adjudication. The booklet 'Careers in Botany' is currently being revised.

The IUBS has proposed a workshop on systematic research, which will take place in Cape Town later in 1989.

Report accepted: Dr F. Getliffe-Horris. Seconded: Dr D. Botha.

Prof. Lubke reported that Dr de Winter and Prof. Eloff have been asked by Council to address the meeting about the proposed amalgamation between the MBG and the BRT. Both speakers expounded on the advantages and enormous potential of the amalgamation. Prof. Lewis enquired about the possibility of establish an institute of Plant Physiologists. This function would be incorporated in the new institute.

6.2 Finances. Prof C.E.J. Botha tabled his report and motivated for an across-the-board R12 increase in subscriptions.

1st Proposal: Unconditional acceptance of Prof. Botha's recommendations. Proposed by Prof. Eicker, seconded by Dr Schoonraad.

Alternative proposal: Council should establish a non-journal receiving category within each type of membership. Proposed by Prof. Eloff. Seconded: Prof. van Staden.

Vote on first proposal: unanimous acceptance of increase. Alternative proposal rejected. This increase was approved by a unanimous
> show of hands.

Council was requested to investigate the possibility of establishing a non-journal receiving category of membership.

6.2.1 Forum Botanicum

Prof. Botha reported that an account for Forum Botanicum had not been received during 1988, and the amount shown did not truly reflect the expenses. He suggested that Council investigate the possibility of incorporating FB into the Journal. Prof. Grobbelaar pointed out that the Bureau for Scientific Publications may not permit this, but this should be further investigated. Prof. Eloff moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Seconded by Dr F. Getliffe-Horris.

6.3 Trust Fund:

Prof. J.J.P. van Wyk addressed the meeting as chairman of the Trust fund. He apologized for not providing detailed audited statements, but reported that recent flooding of the basement of the building in Durban caused damage to records. He had provided R10 000 to the Trust fund as of 28 February 1989, and agreed to provide a further R10 000 by 15 July 1989. These amounts were in anticipation of the sale of the time-sharing units which the Trust Fund had purchased. Cheques for these amounts had already been given to Prof. P.D.F. Kok. Prof. van Wyk agreed to return the pledges to all members as soon as possible. These had not been used in any transactions.

Prof. Lubke moved the acceptance of the report. Seconded by Mr Palmer.

6.4 South African Journal of Botany. Prof. Eloff presented his report which was unanimously accepted.

7. CONGRESSES

7.1 1989. Evaluation forms were completed.

7.2 1990. Rhodes University accepted as venue.

7.3 1991. SAASVELD accepted as venue.

7.4 1992. Invitation from RAU - accepted.

7.5 1993. Invitation from University of the Western Cape - accepted.

8. COUNCIL FOR 1989.

The new council for 1989 was announced:

Prof. C.T. Johnson (President), Prof. R.A. Lubke (Vice-President), Dr W. Stock (Honorary Secretary), Mr J.H. Aalbers (Hon. Treasurer), Proff. E.J. Moll, G.J. Bredenkamp, Drs H.P. Linder, W.J. Bond, D. Botha and Mr T.H. Arnold.

9. AWARDS

Prof. Lubke announced that the Senior Medal for Botany would be awarded to Dr J.A. Coetzee and the Junior Medal to Dr J.J. Midgley during the dinner.

10. CONSITUTION

The request from Council for an increase in the regional subsidy per member was approved. New subsidy - R4 per member.

11. MOTIONS

The motion proposed by Dr de Winter on behalf of the Working Group for the Flora of Southern Africa, was supported with three abstentions.

12. GENERAL

12.1 Members requested that an up-dated membership list be prepared for distribution.

12.2 Dr D. Botha requested that a letter of thanks be addressed to the University of Pretoria for all their contributions to the 1989 Congress.

Prof. Lubke handed over to Prof. Johnson who proposed a vote of thanks to the office bearers.

The meeting ended at 18h05.

RESOLUTION BY THE 15TH CONGRESS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOTANISTS FOR EXPANDED SUPPORT OF THE FLORA OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

CONCERNED at the rate of destruction of the natural vegetation in many parts of southern Africa, often before adequate exploration of flora and vegetation have been carried out;

AWARE of the fundamental importance of plants to the survival of other living creatures and the maintenance of healthy land;

RECOGNIZING the potential value of many plants not yet named or even discovered;

AWARE that, for the reasons mentioned, there is an urgent need for the completion of the Flora of southern Africa (FSA) which will make available a modern inventory of the rich and unique plant resources of the subcontinent;

AWARE that a considerable number of talented and active taxonomists interested in contributing to the FSA, are available locally and overseas;

AWARE that funds for contributions to the FSA, supplied by the Division for Research Grants of the CSIR on the one hand and by the Department of Agriculture and Water Supply on the other through research contracts and fellowships, will no longer be available for this purpose;

AWARE that, in spite of the Stimulation Programme for taxonomic research recently initiated by the Foundation for Research Development at the instigation of the South African Committee of the International Union of Biological Sciences, no funds have become available for research in direct support of the FSA;

The South African Association of Botanists, the representative of professional botany in the RSA, URGES the Minister of Environment Affairs to make the support of local as well as overseas taxonomists who contribute to the FSA possible by creating a special fund for this purpose to which both the State and the Private Sector can contribute.

MEETING TO DISCUSS SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BOTANY

At a meeting held on Wednesday, 11 January 1989 at the 15th Annual Congress about 30 participants discussed the following aspects of getting information to prospective botany students.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST

Academic staff visits to schools: Periodic visits by lecturers to schools to inform pupils about university and also to address matters of interest within or outside the school curriculum. Problem areas in the school syllabus have also been addressed.

Careers booklet: A booklet has been produced and is circulated to schools to stimulate interest in the subject.

Visits of pupils to universities: Many of the universities have open days or occasions when pupils visit the university departments. These include: lectures, workshops, guided tours, science festivals and expos.

Points raised in the discussion were as follows:

- Perhaps we need to approach primary schools to influence the pupils at a younger age.
- We should study the success of the Kirstenbosch programme.
- The school syllabus needs revising and we should advise on the revision especially with respect to: ecology, basic scientific skills, e.g. data collection, practical knowledge as opposed to 'useless' theory.
- When approaching schools do not talk down to the pupils but rather allow them to make a contribution and participate.
- Perhaps SAAB should co-ordinate regional contact between schools and institutions.
- Professor Kristo Pienaar should be approached to see if there is a video programme on careers in botany and whether one could be produced.
- The new careers brochure must be of a high quality and it should clearly sell botany.
- Teachers
 - need re-programming and encouragement to promote botany.
 - SAAB should attempt to motivate teachers to attend refresher courses. This could be done by approaching education departments or providing incentive for teachers to attend.
- Universities- should make time available for academic staff to play a role in student canvassing.

- should undertake to maintain contact with ex-botanist teachers so as to provide information on refresher courses, etc.
- should canvass 'cream of the crop' pupils as well as general potential by school visits, open days, week-end workshops/field trips, etc.
- should provide academic staff with some neuro-linguistic communication training (presentation training) for effectiveness in efforts.

CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion was that we require more students especially those with (a) proficiency (basic skills), (b) motivation and interest.

In order to do this it will require involvement of pupils and staff in a more comprehensive canvassing programme.

R.A. LUBKE

NEWS FROM THE BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY EXHIBITION, LONDON

29 - 30 NOVEMBER 1988

The Botanical Research Institute Pretoria, submitted an exhibit of paintings, entitled 'Trees and shrubs of southern Africa,' for which it was awarded the Grenfell Medal. Most of the paintings were from the journal The Flowering Plants of Africa and the artists involved were Auriol Batten (1 painting), Gillian Condy (5), Stella Gower (1), Esmé Hennessy (1), Jillian Hulme (1), Cythna Letty (2) and Marguerite Scott (2).

R.A. DYER BOOK PRIZE, 1988

The prize for the best scientific paper or series of papers by a member of the Botanical Research Institute published during 1987/88 has been awarded to Mr Frank Brusse of the National Herbarium, Pretoria.

HABITAT COUNCIL - REPORT FOR 1988

The Habitat Council continues to play an important watchdog role. Through its own activities and by keeping its eyes and ears open to tips from the public, it is able to alert the appropriate authorities and keep issues alive. Numerous important issues have come into and remained in prominence in the past year. Only a few of these can be mentioned here, such as:

Land-use planning in the Drakensberg/Maluti Complex;
Port Alfred Marina development scheme;
Keurbooms/Bitou area;
Regulations on land adjacent the high-water mark;
Impact of Lesotho-Highland Water Scheme on the environment;
Conservation of mountain areas;
Mining activities on the West Coast.

SOUTH AFRICAN SYNTAXONOMIC NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 1988

The main concern of the past year has been whether and when it will be possible to invite Prof. Pignatti to South Africa with a view to being able to make use of his expertise towards the commencement of ranking and the setting up of a South African syntaxonomic classification and nomenclature. Fortunately, thanks to the University of Pretoria and, more specifically, the efforts of Prof. G.K. Theron and Prof. G.J. Bredenkamp, it has been possible to invite him to attend the 1989 S.A.A.B. Congress, to lead at least one workshop and to discuss problems with his South African colleagues.

REDAKTRISE/EDITOR

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