

Newsletter of the Physiology Society of Southern Africa (PSSA)

SPECIAL ISSUE:

- The 32nd Annual Congress of the PSSA, Coffee Bay, 12-15 Sept 2004

Inside contents:

- Council News 2
- Next meetings 2
- Congress news 3

Report back from the organizer

“What went on behind the scenes”

The 32nd Annual Congress of the Physiology Society of Southern Africa

“A memorable three days at Coffee Bay”. That’s the general comment from most attendees at the recent PSSA congress. We thank all the participants, the team of organizers, the hotel management, and the technical staff. The highlight of the conference was the inauguration ceremony by the Principal of UNITRA and the welcome speech by the Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, UNITRA.

But the road to success was not easy; it was full of hurdles, disappointments and sometimes extremely stressful. The conference centre itself was not ready just two days before the conference. About mid-August, the conference centre had no proper ceiling or flooring. Those were the days when I had sleepless nights and made countless number of trips to Coffee Bay to make things happen. And it did happen. It is sheer determination by the hotel management and the confidence we had in them which made this

meeting possible. I sincerely thank them for the job well done.

The scientific committee also did a splendid job; two members did the programming and compilation; another did the editing and proof - reading. In spite of inexperience and time limitations, everything went smoothly, and the team deservedly received acclamation from the past and present Presidents of PSSA (*see p.2, editor*).

The sponsoring committee did a wonderful job. Standard Bank, UNITRA, WSU, Shalom, Lasec, Swift Travels and Xerox responded to our call for support and were generous in their contributions.

Perhaps it is an appropriate time to reflect on the research experiences of the medical students at the undergraduate level. By encouraging them to present at PSSA, we may be paving way for future physiologists from the

medical fraternity as well. Three undergraduate MBChB students from UNITRA presented data from their practicals and the novel idea of introducing a prize for this category was conceived by me and nurtured by Prof Iputo, who stood by me at all times. I thank him for the encouragement and the constructive criticisms.

Total registration for the conference was about 100, including accompanying persons. There were 5 cancellations and the entire technical committee was sponsored from the organizational funds. This sponsorship and the fact that some delegates (students) paid less than others made inroads into our profits. However we are happy that we managed to settle all the accounts and once the audit statement is ready, we will credit the PSSA account with some donations.

Prof E Umapathy
UNITRA

PSSA council news

New president



*Prof Kathy Myburgh
President
PSSA*

Prof Kathy Myburgh, Head of the Department of Physiological Sciences at the University of Stellenbosch, has been appointed as the new president of the PSSA. We wish her well.

We are indebted to the outgoing president, Prof Johan Koeslag, from the Department of Medical Physiology at the University of Stellenbosch, for his enthusiastic and substantial contributions to the society, particularly over the past 3 years. Thank you, Johan.

PSSA council

The council of PSSA consists of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary/Treasurer and four additional members. Term of office for the President and Secretary/Treasurer is 3 years. The Vice President is convener of the next Scientific Meeting of the Society. Other members of the council are elected annually at the annual congress of the PSSA.

The council is:

President: Dr Kathy Myburgh (Physiological Sciences, Stellenbosch)
Secretary/Treasurer: Dr Jacques van Rooyen (Physiological Sciences, Stellenbosch)
Vice-President: Dr Zig StClair Gibson (Sports Science, UCT)
Members: Prof Angela Woodiwis (Physiology, Wits)
Dr Alta Schutte (Physiology, North-West University)
Dr Nico Claasen (Physiology, Pretoria)
Dr Jira Awotedu (Physiology, UNITRA).

Forthcoming PSSA meetings: 2005 and 2006

Don't miss the next meetings of the PSSA.

PSSA 2005

The 2005 Congress will be hosted by the MRC/UCT Research Unit for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine, at the University of Cape Town. Dr Zig StClair Gibson will be the convener. Visit the PSSA website (*see page 4*) for updates.

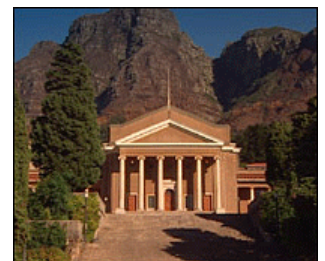
PSSA 2006

The 2006 PSSA Congress will be hosted by the University of KwaZuluNatal (formerly University of Natal and University of Durban-Westville).

Good luck to the organizers.

We look forward to meeting up again.

UCT, 2005



Conference report-back: Perspectives of PSSA 2004 as a participant



Any honest attendee of the PSSA Congress would confess that the venue was a very attractive factor when considering attendance this year. Though Coffee Bay met all expectations, it was the very interesting presentations, excellent Wyndham and poster competitors that stole the show.

A reassurance to any young newcomer to the PSSA is the warm relationships that exist between young and *old* attendees from different universities. This was also clearly noticeable during all social events, and also to “outsiders”, such as our invited speaker Prof. John Morrison (UAE University). He remarked that this Society seems to have wonderful and healthy relationships and that members seem to be friends, rather than colleagues.

I guess that we could all agree on that, and in the words of one of the students “I can’t wait until next year to see everybody again!”

Alta Schutte, North-West University

Student prize-winners: PSSA 2004

The Wyndham Prize

The Wyndham Prize Competition was instituted by the Society in 1985, and first awarded in 1986. It is named in honour of the late Professor Cyril Wyndham, internationally renowned South African exercise and heat stress physiologist. The award is made for the best oral presentation by a young researcher in the physiological sciences at the PSSA meeting. The winner in 2004 was **Andreas Themistocleous**, a PhD student at Wits University.

The Johnny van der Walt Prize

The Society has decided to remember the late Prof Johnny van der Walt by naming the prize for the best poster by a young scientist after him. Johnny was Head of the Department of Physiology in the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort, University of Pretoria, from 1990 until his untimely death on 28 June 2004. He was one of the Society's great stalwarts, and will be remembered for excellent science, his sharp insights and enormous enthusiasm for physiology. In 2004, the prize was won by **Celeste Fouché** (see page 4 for photo) from The University of Stellenbosch.



Andreas in action.

Editorial

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PSSA on the Web!

Visit:

[http://www.sun.ac.za/
medphys/pssa.htm](http://www.sun.ac.za/medphys/pssa.htm)

Editorial contributions

We are pleased to welcome **Dr Alta Schutte** from the School for Physiology, Nutrition and Consumer Sciences at North-West University, on board as a member of the editorial team.

This has been a special edition of the newsletter focusing on the 2004

PSSA Conference. The next regular issue is planned for November however it is dependant on your input. We welcome contributions to this newsletter. Please send us your contributions for the next newsletter by the end of Oct 2004.

We'd particularly like to

hear about your research news. Let us know if you have an exciting new paper *In Press*, so that PSSA members can be the first in the know!

Outside looking in:

The last words are an excerpt of a letter to Johan from John Morrison the invited speaker who gave the Johnny van der Walt Memorial lecture and also served on the panel of judges for the Wyndham competition.

"It was a great pleasure to meet you at the PSSA. I thought the meeting was really excellent - the right size for a workshop and plenty of enthusiastic young folk; everyone was so friendly.

I also enjoyed being part of the Wyndham Prize judging panel: this was the first time I have come across such a marking scheme and I thought it was excellent; I'll try and get others to use it here for our research Conference prizes.

SA was wonderful, and we returned home with many happy memories".



Celeste receiving her prize.



*Recipient of special prize for UNITRA
MBBCh undergrad category*

PHYSIOLOGY SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

