



RHODOS

STAFF NEWSLETTER

10 DECEMBER 1997 VOL9 NO 21

A year of change and development

WE ARE NEARING the end of a year which has seen many changes and developments at Rhodes.

The last issue of Rhodos carried my recent address to staff, which covered most of these. It appears that these developments have not gone unnoticed outside the University and it is exciting to note the increase in enrolments for 1998. To date 942 new students have been accepted and have paid their deposits. The residential system will be stressed and the need to find accommodation for students in Grahamstown will be essential to solve the accommodation problem.

I believe that Rhodes is on track for the next century — we have a short time to prepare ourselves for what that will bring and I am confident that we can continue the tradition of excellence that makes Rhodes one of the best universities in the country.

The excellence of the service we deliver to our students is dependent on all staff — academic, research, service, technical and administrative. Each one of you counts in our efforts to keep things running smoothly. Those who serve as “background” people are as important as those with a higher profile.

Thank you for what you have done for



Rhodes this year. I wish you a happy and relaxed holiday season. May we all return in 1998 and make Rhodes even better than it is now.

*Dr David Woods
Vice-Chancellor*

Millenium bug not a problem for Rhodes computers

THERE IS NO DOUBT, the experts agree, that the next century begins on 1st Jan, 2001, but at the same time there is no doubt that we are all going to celebrate it on 1st Jan, 2000. I heard that hotels like Claridges in London are already fully booked for the New year celebrations that night.

Another thing which is not going to wait for Jan, 2001 is the computer prob-

lems which will no doubt hit a lot of people. However, Rhodes computer users can rest assured that all our data has been stored with century dates since 1996, and all data pre-dating that has been converted to century dates, so out problems will be minimal. Happy New Year!

*Mary Green,
Information Systems Development*

Demand for Rhodes education graduates

IN RESPONSE to a press advertisement inviting applications for the Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) course for secondary school teachers, the Rhodes University Education Department has received an anonymous letter consisting of a newspaper clipping headed “Teacher cuts” and scrawled questions about Rhodes advertising a teaching career path in this climate.

“These questions are very understandable, and indeed appropriate,” commented Dr George Euvrard, Head of the Rhodes University Education Department in Grahamstown. “Every day we read in the press about further teacher cut-backs, on top of the right-sizing exercise which has already seen the retrenchment of thousands of school educators.”

As a result of this and other factors, education student numbers nationwide have plummeted, especially at universities. Departments and faculties of education are being ‘rationalised’, some closing down and others amalgamating with other faculties. In the light of this, how can Rhodes justify an advert which reads “Join a dynamic university department and become professionally prepared to contribute to a changing and challenging education scene”?

“The strange irony of the situation,” responds Dr Euvrard, “is that hardly a day passes without my receiving a telephone call or fax from a school principal pleading for our HDE graduates. Principals tell me that they have had Rhodes HDE students before and, please, can they have more! Over the years my colleagues have clearly done a thoroughly professional job and our students have proved themselves to be wonderful ambassadors for our teaching programmes.

“In direct contradiction to what we are led to believe in the press (and which might be quite true in the general sense), Rhodes cannot provide enough HDE graduates to the schools asking for them. And this isn’t just in the ‘scarce subjects’ of mathematics and the natural sciences, but includes English, Afrikaans, Accounting, Geography, Business Economics, Music and Physical Education.

“We are also contacted by teaching

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Letters to the Editor

The Editor,

You ask for an answer to the question: When does the next century begin? This is my answer.

The New Century

Q: How long have you lived when you are one year old?

A: One year.

Q: When does your second year begin?

A: The day after your first birthday.

Q: How long is a century?

A: 100 years.

Q: When does the next century begin?

A: At the start of year 101.

Q: When does the 20th century end?

A: After 2 000 years (=20 x 100).

Q: So, when does the 21st century begin?

A: When the 20th century is over. After 2 000 years are complete.

That is, when the year 2001 begins: 1 January, 2001.

*Prof Gary Barkhuizen
Linguistics and English Language*

Dear Colleagues

I may not be able to thank everyone individually for the goodwill and generosity shown me in regard to the Farewell Function held on 19 November and the presentation then made to me.

I ask all that I do not reach personally to regard this letter as an expression to you of my appreciation. The Dictionary of South African English will be a constant and recurring source of pleasure and a reminder of the kindness I have received from Rhodes colleagues.

There are so many at Rhodes who have been warm-hearted and willing to help me in varied ways during my years of service.

Thank you all. Yours sincerely,

Brenda Nicholls

The Editor,

I wish to thank all my colleagues at Rhodes for their friendship during my 18 years here, and especially for their support in 1997.

Thanks to those who attended and made my farewell function such a memorable occasion. To all of you who contributed so generously towards my farewell gift, thank you again.

I hope you will accept this open invitation to visit and stay at our lovely cottage in Fish Hoek whenever you are in that part of the country. Coral will be joining me at the end of the first term. Our new details will be: Address: El Shaddai, 12 Aloe Close, Fish Hoek, 7975. Telephone and Fax: 012 785 3816; Cell: 083 444 9369

With best wishes to you all,

Peter Surtees

Community project receives Presidential Award



RHODES UNIVERSITY contributes to many community developments, one of which, the Grahamstown Railway project, was recently honoured with a Presidential Award for Community Initiatives.

This project has ensured the retention of almost 60 jobs in Grahamstown and Alicedale and the restoration of a passenger rail service to Grahamstown that connects with the main line express at Alicedale.

The picture above, shows (from Left to right) Professor Colin Lewis (Rhodes University representative on the Grahamstown Railway Project committee), Mr Steve Cridland (Town Clerk of Grahamstown), Mayor Nontuthuzelo Faku (Mayor of Grahamstown), Mr Derek Raynsford (committee member), Mr Casper Erasmus (Town Clerk of Alicedale), Mayor Phumla Matyumza (Mayor of Alicedale) and Ms Regan Verwey (one of the adjudicators) at the ceremony, where the project was awarded a Presidential Award.

Obituary

**Professor Leonard Walter
Lanham**

1921 — 1997

by Professor Paul Walters

For Len Lanham, the gift of language was the surest sign of the presence of the Divine in human life.

Len was born in 1921 in Mossel Bay, and went to England in 1939, where he signed up as a private in the British Army. He was sent out to India, where he learned Hindustani, some Gurkhali, and learned to read the ancient Sanskrit script. Thus even in war, his flair for languages showed itself.

He returned to Johannesburg in 1946, and received a BA in 1951. This was followed by a First Class Honours Degree in Bantu Languages and an MA with distinction in 1954. In 1955, Len took up a Senior Lectureship in Bantu Languages at Rhodes. He completed his PhD through Wits in 1960, and was then granted a Carnegie Travelling Fellowship for 6 months in America. He returned from the States to take up the first Chair of Phonetics and General Linguistics at Wits, a post he occupied until he was offered an *ad hominem* Chair in the Rhodes Linguistics Department in late 1978.

By 1982, he was effectively holding down three jobs: Professor of Linguistics, Chairman of the Molteno Project Committee, and Honorary Director of ISEA.

Len Lanham was a man whose life's work was dedicated to helping others break through artificial barriers of literacy and language. He died this year, after a painful struggle, which he waged so long and with silent courage against a wasting disease.

Alzeimers investigated at Rhodes

A JOINT study by Professor Santy Daya of the Biochemistry and Microbiology Department, Dr Tebello Nyokong and Janice Limson, both of the Chemistry Department, shows that naturally occurring compounds in the brain such as tryptophan, serotonin and melatonin are able to bind metal ions such as aluminium, copper, iron and lead.

According to Prof Daya, this raises the possibility that aluminium accumulates in the brains of Alzeimers patients due to markedly reduced production of these compounds. Such a reduction would result in decreased metal removal from the brain. Melatonin production in particular, has been shown to decrease with age.

Prof Daya recently presented the study, which is the first of its kind, at the American Society for Neuroscience Congress in New Orleans, USA. "Our research received a great deal of interest at the Congress," said Prof Daya.

Together with Professor Raj Kalaria (Kenya) and Dr Abdu Adem (Ethiopia), Prof Daya ran the Society of Neuroscientists in Africa (SONA) booth at the Congress, which was attended by about 25 000 delegates. In their booth, they advertised SONA and Southern African Neuroscience activities as well as the forthcoming SONA congress in Senegal.

Prof Daya is also the official representative of the Southern African Neuroscience Society (SANS) and SONA on the governing council of the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO) which met during the Congress.



In November, the Eastern Cape Division of the Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology held its 10th Anniversary symposium at the 1820 National Settlers Monument. The symposium, organised by Rhodes University's Professor Santy Daya, was attended by 52 delegates from Rhodes University, University of Fort Hare, University of Port Elizabeth and Port Elizabeth Technikon. Amongst the delegates were (from left to right) Dr S.g. Burton, Prof C. Whitely, Dr Graz, Prof S. Daya, Prof R. Naude, Prof W. Oelofsen, Prof J. Brand, Dr R. Dorrington and Miss F. Ngcakani.

"By forming a federation between SANS and SONA, we secured a vote on the IBRO governing council. This was good for Africa, as countries such as Germany and Brazil did not manage to secure a vote on the council," said Prof Daya.

He also visited the Neuroscience Centre of Excellence at the Louisiana State University Medical Centre and also visited the Dr Parmanand at the Molecular Genetics

Centre at the University of Pittsburg where research is being done on gene therapy of muscular dystrophy.

Prof Daya said that at the Conference there was a strong initiative to bring neuroscience to school children. "I took photos of the working models and hopefully we will construct the same here". The models, he said, could be shown at next year's science festival.

AIDS delegation visits Rhodes

A HIGH-POWERED delegation of professionals in the field of epidemiology, prevention, treatment and control of HIV/Aids visited Rhodes University on Friday.

The team, travelling under the auspices of the Citizen Ambassador Program of People International, are participating in bilateral exchanges with their South African counterparts.

The delegation had, among others, representatives from Washington, California, Michigan, Taiwan, Georgia, Ohio, Illinois, Colorado and New York.

The team was in the country to meet local physicians, educators and other health professionals with the purpose of exchanging skills and ideas while participating in workshops, discussion sessions and site visits to health care facilities, reproductive health clinics and universities. The team was particularly interested in HIV/Aids topics.

While at Rhodes, the delegation had discussions with Dr Kevin Kelly of the Psychology Department, Anthropology Head of Department Professor Michael Whisson and Clinical Co-ordinator, Biopharmaceutics Research Institute, Mrs Penny Bernard.



A delegation of professionals in the fields of epidemiology and the prevention, treatment and control of HIV/AIDS visited Rhodes University earlier this month. Seen here is the group's leader Dr Miriam Shields, flanked by Rhodes V-C, Dr David Woods (left) and Mrs Charlotte Woods

They also met Ms Dana Labe of FAMSA and Ms Katherine Kent of Hospice.

The group had lunch, hosted by Vice-Chancellor Dr David Woods and Mrs Charlotte Woods, before leaving for Port Elizabeth.

Successful pilot year for Fulcrum Forum

THE FULCRUM FORUM acts as a central body to which representatives of different action groups report once a month. The action groups involve areas where it has been felt that there is a need to consider certain aspects of the university community. As this year was seen as a "pilot year" a few areas were selected and it is hoped that we will be able to take on other areas of concern next year.

Welcoming of New Staff

Sally Terry and her group have been involved in adding to the existing work in this area done by the RWA. In addition to visiting new members of staff and their families they have assembled very useful packages of information and maps to alleviate the problems of those not initiated in the ways of Grahamstown. Rosemary Anderson has been most helpful in supplying information as to names, whereabouts, etc of those using RU accommodation. Others are often more difficult to find! It is felt that the plight of most people is known and has hopefully been dealt with. Most people seem to settle in to the basic routine fairly easily. Although this is no longer only a problem at the start of the academic year, and now occurs fairly regularly throughout the year there will undoubtedly be a large wave to deal with at the start of next year.

Visiting

Anne Smout has been very active in visiting members of staff and their families who have been seriously ill. This personal touch has been greatly welcomed and she has now been joined by Bev Fourie in doing this. Charlotte Woods has made contact with families of bereaved members of staff on a similar basis. The biggest problem in this respect has been the difficulty in being informed of such cases. Secretaries of departments have been asked to keep us informed. Any information in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

Day Care Centre

Although Fulcrum Forum has not been

actively involved in the Centre, Sandy Stephenson reports regularly on this to the Forum as it is felt that this is such a vital aspect of Rhodes staff lives. The Centre continues to provide a very valuable service and Anne Krige and her dedicated staff are to be congratulated on the exceptional standard that is maintained at the Centre. This was acknowledged as a result of an unannounced visit made to the centre recently by the municipal inspectors. Plans for 1998 include further fundraising and painting of murals. Any help or suggestions would be most welcome.

As it was felt that there was a need for greater social mixing at all level of the RU staff community the following 3 areas were also initiated.

Sport

This highly successful social mixer is the area of Ros Parker. It is not easy to find sporting activities which are able to accommodate a large number of people of all ranges of talent and ability. This Ros did in her first Staff Bowls Tournament which turned out to be a great success involving 18 Departments and not far off 100 people. This proved to be a great mixer of staff from all departments and much fun was had by all. Ros was delighted with response. She has plans for other activities for next year which should be equally successful.

Dave's Den

Dave's Den was previously known as the V-C's Dining Room. This was seen as a venue for staff to meet after work for a quick (or longer) drink on the way home. It has been met with varying success in terms of numbers but its success should perhaps be seen in the fellowship enjoyed by those who do attend rather than in numbers. The venue has been regarded as somewhat of a problem but plans are underway for great improvements which will certainly make it more inviting. The purpose of this activity is not seen as in competition to those other well-loved watering holes which staff enjoy but rather as a venue for

those who feel like a change of scenery on occasion or who do not frequent elsewhere. Choosing the right day has been debatable - suggestions would be welcome! Chris Walwyn and Les Reynolds have been the force behind this venture.

Socials

This area has been handled with great dexterity by Shelly Samuel and Jenny Purdon and they have achieved the aim of greater staff socializing in two very different areas. Namely the Staff Children's Party held last year (and about to be repeated) and the Founder's Day Ball held in the 3rd term this year. Both have been met with great enthusiasm by those who attended and great anticipation for repeat performances of many who did not. Shelly has exciting ideas for next year which we hope will include an even wider range of our staff members.

RWA

The RWA (Rhodes Women's Association) is represented under the Fulcrum umbrella by Jean Wright. This avoids valuable time being spent on areas already well covered by the work done by them. Apart from being involved in our Fulcrum activities the RWA has had a good productive year continuing with their lunches and lunchtime speakers, the cultural evening and the Fort Beaufort Rose Show. They have been active in the upgrading programmes at Settlers Hospital and the proposal for a new private hospital in Grahamstown.

Babysitting Club

Ronwyn Coulson has been responsible for forming a very well organised and professional service for parents and students in this regard. Students involved are experienced in child care and have been well-screened only being accepted with excellent references. Most of them also have first aid/child minding certificates. This group can provide an excellent service to all staff parents.

Big demand for Rhodes HDE graduates

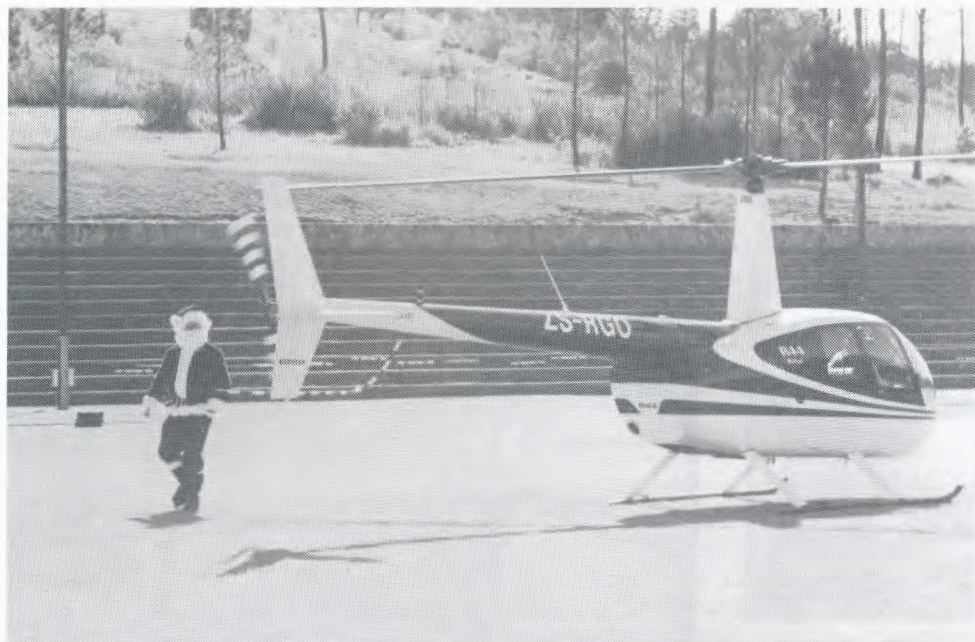
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agencies in England, Scotland and the East wanting Rhodes graduates.

"Another irony is that despite the much-quoted level of despondency amongst teachers in the profession of education, we are overwhelmed by the number of teachers wanting to invest in their career development, to learn how to improve their professional practice, and to gain further qualifications. This trend is continuing despite the fact that such qualifications no longer offer a further salary promotion. We

offer the largest number of masters degree and BEd (equivalent to honours) degree places in the University, and yet we still have to turn away the vast majority of applicants.

"I think that we can stand by our advertisement. Our programmes are up to date with current developments such as Curriculum 2005, the schools, teachers and graduate students are responding to this, and rather than having to 'rationalise' we are in fact in the very process of establishing an extra post in our Department and will be interviewing applicants next week."



Entertainment galore at delightful Christmas romp

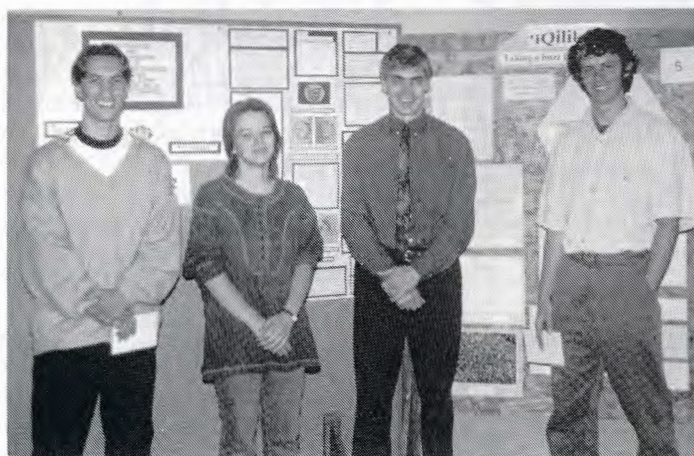
ON FRIDAY, December 5, the Prospect Field was invaded by a horde of about 420 excited staff member's children for the annual Christmas Party.

The weather was fine and there was plenty for the children to do: A sing-song, a gymnastics display, face painting, jumping castles and a trampoline, an obstacle course, painting pictures, bubble-fun, a python display, Andrew Tracey telling stories and tractor rides until, at last, Father Christmas arrived by helicopter.

The children were given their presents, cooldrinks, ice-cream and balloons and watched a clown show before going wearily, but happily home.



So what's brewing in Micro?



Professor Sakkie Pretorius (third from left) of the University of Stellenbosch was the external judge in the Microbiology 3 project Awards contest. He is seen here with the winners of the best poster Francois van der Merwe (left) and Margurite Mason (second from left) and overall project winner Garth Cambray (far right).



In October this year, the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology named its winners for the annual Microbiology Beer Brewing Practical. Garth Cambray (left) and Chido Mhlanga (far right) were declared winners by a team of judges from South African Breweries in Port Elizabeth, Donovan Sparks (second from the left), Jean Webber (centre) and Anton Erasmus (second from the right).



Beer brewed by the Technical staff in the Department was declared the best beer during the annual Microbiology 3 Beer Brewing practical. Showing off their beer are Mr Reuben Molefi, Mr Dick Gadu and Mr Michael Nqweniso.



Winners of the best label section of the competition were (from Left to right) Claire Watchman, Greg Assink, Farah Zavahir and Francois van der Merwe.

Replying to an invitation to a scientist's ball

[from Funny Pages Mailing List]

- Pierre and Marie Curie were radiating enthusiasm.
- Einstein thought it would be relatively easy to attend.
- Volta was electrified and Archimedes, buoyant at the thought.
- Ampere was worried he wasn't up to current research.
- Wilbur Wright accepted, provided he and Orville could get a flight.
- Ohm resisted the idea at first.
- Boyle said he was under too much pressure.
- Edison thought it would be an illuminating experience.
- Watt reckoned it would be a good way to let off steam.
- Stephenson thought the whole idea was loco.
- Dr Jekyll declined — he hadn't been feeling himself lately.
- Morse's reply: "I'll be there on the dot. Can't stop now must dash."
- Heisenberg was uncertain if he could make it.
- Hertz said in the future he planned to attend with greater frequency.
- Henry begged off due to a low capacity for alcohol.
- Hawking said he'd try to string enough time together to make a space in his schedule.

Geology goes from strength to strength

DR ALAN RICE from the USA has been associated with the department for two years and has recently been awarded an FRD Research Fellowship for 1998 to be jointly shared with the Physics Department.

Alan's research interests are very wide ranging from meteorite impacts to problems of nuclear waste disposal. He is currently working on a project entitled "Modelling of Geological Transport Processes which is concerned with fluid dynamic behaviour of molten and partially molten rock material as well as the movement of fluids through rock. His work has important implications for mineralisation associated with igneous intrusions as well as groundwater resources.

Following Alan's arrival, Dr Eric Ferr, (France) and Dr Octavian Catuneanu (Romania) joined the academic staff in 1996, and this year also saw the arrival of Dr Ron Sheets (USA) and Dr Jeff Wilson (Scotland).

Ron is the Chamber of Mines Post Doctoral Fellow and is setting up a new laboratory for fluid inclusion research with John Moore. Fluid inclusions are important in understanding hydrothermal processes in the formation of ore deposits. Jeff Wilson holds

Sitting in the Geology Department tearoom it would be hard to place oneself in South Africa, judging by the strong international flavour the department has developed over the last few years. This is perhaps fitting for a discipline which focuses on the study of the earth as a whole and the other planets and their satellites.

an FRD Post Doctoral Fellowship and will be working with Eric Ferr, on the Bushveld Granite. Early in 1998 Laurent Ameglio (France) will be taking up a Rhodes University Post Doctoral Fellowship. Laurent is a geophysicist, specialising in gravity studies which can be used to determine the presence and shape of hidden rock masses.

He will be working with Roger Jacob, Eric Ferr, and John Moore on the unusual gold deposit at Navachab in Namibia. These new arrivals have brought an important new slant to the activities of the Geology department. For the past several decades the Department's strength has been directed towards chemical aspects of geology. Although this strength is maintained, Alan Rice (fluid dynamics), Eric Ferr, and Jeff Wilson (magnetism) and Laurent Ameglio

(gravity) will promote the application of physics to addressing problems in geology.

If this is not all, the Geology Department has also been instrumental in establishing Earth-ISE (Earth Sciences International Scientific Exchange) in conjunction with the FRD. This project is an exchange and training programme between

several universities in South Africa and France. The programme encourages scientific interaction between universities and the mining industry and develops link between educational programmes (in South Africa and France) at post-graduate level.

John Moore and Eric Ferr, have done all the hard work to make this possible and the South African aspects of the programme will be run by John Moore out of Rhodes University. How John finds time for all the commitments is a wonder. He has recently been invited to join the Editorial Board of the prestigious international journal, *Economic Geology*, and just last week he returned from Finland where he has initiated a PhD research project. Early next year John travels to Tanzania to present a specialised workshop on mineral exploration in lateritic terrains.

Rhodes IT students perform well in national contest

TWO INFORMATION Systems students, Mr Thamsanqa Dube and Mr David Wright were selected to participate in the finals of a nationwide information technology essay competition in Johannesburg last month.

The competition, organised by University of Witwatersand and IBM, was open to all students in South African universities. Mr Dube and Mr Wright were among the five finalists vying for the first prize of IBM equipment valued at R15 000, which was won by a University of Cape Town student. The second prize, an IBM personal computer, also went to a UCT student.

Information Systems Head of Department Professor David Sewry said that although the students did not win, they made very impressive presentations.

RUMEP students graduate



In November, Rhodes University Maths Education Project (RUMEP) awarded certificates to 46 farm school mathematics teachers who successfully completed a three-year training course. Present at the certificate presentation ceremony were (from left to right): RUMEP Director Mr John Stoker, ABSA Head of Communications, Port Elizabeth Mr Andy de la Mare, Department of Education representative Ms Thobeka Maselana and Rhodes University Mathematics HOD Professor Wesley Kotze.

S2A3 Science Awards

Phil Minnaar

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN Association for the Advancement of Science (also known as S2A3) presented its gold medal and silver medal to top South African scientists on Friday evening.

The South Africa Medal (Gold) for 1996 was awarded to Dr David Woods, Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University for his outstanding research in microbiology.

The Gold Medal for 1997 was awarded to Dr Charles Brain, former Director of the Transvaal Museum for his discoveries in excavations at various caves and specifically at Makapansgat, Sterkfontein and Swartkrans. The Gold medal is awarded to a person who, during his or her life, has contributed to the advancement of science, either on a broad front or in a specialised field.

The British Association Medal (Silver) for 1996 was awarded to professor Edward Mathews of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Pretoria for his work on the thermal performance of buildings and on aeronautics. The Silver Medal for 1997 was awarded to Professor Wayne Goddard of the Department of Computer Science of the University of Natal for his research in Mathematics and Computer Science. The Silver Medal is awarded to a person under the age of 40 who is actively engaged in scientific research and who has proved evidence of outstanding capability and achievement, especially when measured by international standards.

The Gold and Silver Medals of S2A3 are considered as some of the highest awards to scientists in Southern Africa.

The Southern African Association for the Advancement of Science was established in 1902. Some of its presidents include Genl Jan Smuts, Jan Hofmeyr, Dr Robert Broom, Dr Meiring Naude and Prof Danie Joubert. Other recipients of the Gold Medal include Rudolph Marloth, Robert Broom, Austin Roberts and Philip Tobias.

The aims of S2A3 are to promote science awareness in South Africa, to encourage the pursuit of science amongst the youth and to commend and to recognise those who have excelled in their scientific field.

Alty Award



Derek Mosenthall, Junior Lecturer in Social and Industrial Sociology on the East London campus receives his Alty Award from Dr David Woods

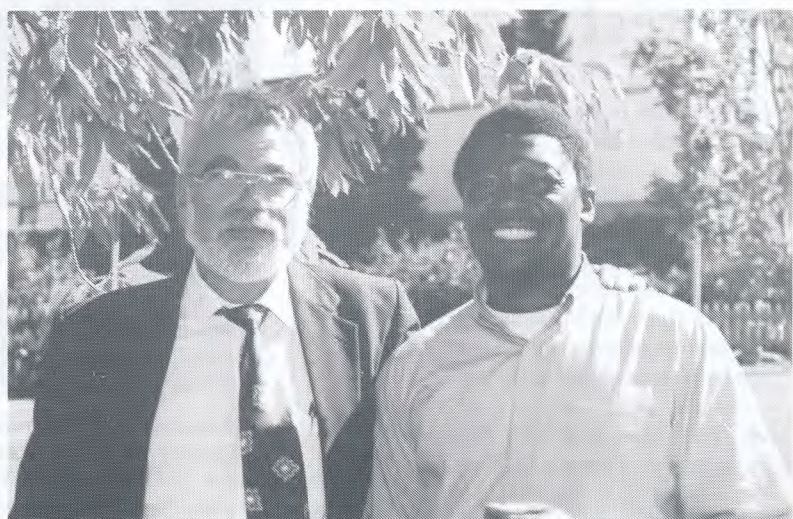
Dedicated service acknowledged



It was all smiles when Vice Chancellor Dr David Woods (centre presented awards to (from left to right) Mrs Joyce Mbonde (retiring), Mrs Princess Ngcwayi (medical boarding), Mrs Ida Ngesi, Mrs Hilda Mata (both retiring) and Mrs Mati Nkwinti (medical boarding).



Mr Joseph Jadi (right) who has been at Rhodes for 25 years was presented with a long-service award. He is seen here with Professor Gary Burkhuizen of the Linguistics and English Department.



Sam Mzangwa (right who was presented with a long service award after 15 years at Rhodes is seen here with Professor CEJ Botha of the Botany Department.

Film feast at Scifest

MOVIE BUFFS and scientists alike will want to book their seats now for the Scifest Film Fest in Grahamstown next year.

The film festival is just one of the exciting additions to the programme for next year's Sasol National Festival of Science, Engineering and Technology being held at the 1820 Settlers National Monument in Grahamstown from March 28 until April 5, 1998.

From comedies to documentaries, a wide range of thought-provoking films has been selected for the nine-day film festival.

Although diverse in content, all the films share a common feature — science in the widest sense of the word.

A highlight of the screenings will be the South African premier of *Infinity* — the film based on the life of the legendary theoretical physicist Richard Feynman. Directed by Mathew Broderick, this film lets the viewer into Feynman's personal world during the time he spent working on the development of the atom bomb.

Despite its focus on Feynman's mathematical and scientific genius, the film is nevertheless a bitter-sweet tale of human emotion and the trials and tribulations of everyday life prior to the Second World War.

A rare selection of science fiction films — most of which have earned cult status — will be screened, including Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, produced in 1927.

Seen along with *Blade Runner* — the Director's Cut — viewers will be struck by the modernity of Lang's vision all those years ago.

Both films explore human existence in a futuristic world which invariably seems to rob the individual of personal freedom. This theme will be explored after each screening during a discussion session led by Ian Rijdsdijk — a film studies expert who

specialises in this genre.

Hiroshima Mon Amor and the hilarious cult comedy *Brazil* also touch on the issue of personal freedom as does the movie *Synthetic Pleasures* — although the latter belongs strictly to the "science non-fiction" category and offers a startling exploration of current interactions between humankind and the environment — albeit real or virtual.

A somewhat alien world is also portrayed in the controversial David Cronenberg film *Naked Lunch* — which takes the viewer into a world of bizarre creatures; and *Tank Girl* — based on the popular American comic strip and featuring a host of wierd and wonderful creatures including "kangaroo-men" and a small group of self-sufficient desert rats.

In the natural science category, the magical insect interaction in *Microcosmos* and the international-award winning *Death by Design* give viewers a more-than-close-up look at our physical world.

Sasol Scifest — as the festival has come to be known — is a project of the Grahamstown Foundation and is aimed at popularising science in all its variations.

The film festival is just one of the innovative additions the Scifest organisers have planned to ensure that the programme for next year's festival appeals to as broad a spectrum of the community as possible.

Full details of the screening times and dates appear in the official Sasol Scifest '98 programme, which will be on sale at selected outlets throughout the country at the end of January, 1998. Internet users will be able to access programme details from the SciFest website at <http://www.nml.ru.ac.za/scifest>.

For more information, contact Shelagh Stow at tel: (0461) 23402, fax (0461) 27452 or e-mail scifest@found.ru.ac.za.

Biotech solutions to water salinity

RISING SALINITY levels have been identified as one of the most serious problems facing the public water system in South Africa.

The application of biotechnological solutions to aspects of this problem have been undertaken in a research programme at Rhodes University, which has been sponsored by the Water Research Commission

(WRC).

One of these projects came to fruition yesterday (November 27, 1997) with the opening, by the Minister of Water Affairs, Professor Kader Asmal, of an Algal Integrated Ponding System (AIPS) at Mossop Western Leathers (MWL) in Wellington in the Western Cape.

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Briefs

Journal Citation Reports available

THANKS TO A grant from the Fisher Bequest, the Library is now has the 1996 Microfiche edition of Journal Citation Reports for the Science Citation Index and the Social Sciences Citation Index.

The microfiche and accompanying documentation are in the Reference Office behind the Information Desk. A microfiche reader is available in the Reference section of the Library.

Journal Citation Reports permit you to answer many important and fundamental questions about journals:

- What are the largest journals?
- What journals are most frequently used?
- What are the "hottest" journals?
- What journals have the highest impact?
- What publications does a journal cite-and which cite it?

For more information please contact Babalwa Sishuta — h.sishuta@ru.ac.za or Vivien Botha — v.botha@ru.ac.za — telephone ext. 8462.

Honours fee rebate system

AT THE LAST meeting of the Senate Executive Committee a question was raised about Honours fee rebates. There is a fee rebate scheme in operation for students who obtain a degree with "Distinction in X", and who then apply to read for the Honours degree in X. Such students qualify for a 50% fee rebate at Honours level.

There are, of course, some Honours degrees for which there is no corresponding third year major subject. For example, in Science one can read for Biotechnology Honours. Although there is no Biotechnology 3, students must typically have a major in Biochemistry or Microbiology.

Further details may be obtained from the Dean of Students Division.

Research methodology course

THE DEPARTMENT of Education will run a Research Methodology Module from 9 — 20 February 1997 inclusive. Any colleagues interested in attending all or part of the course, or those wishing to comment upon it should contact Professor Pat Irwin or Dr Eureta Janse van Rensburg. There will be a nominal charge for materials.

Res shortage — appeal for help

DUE TO AN unprecedented demand for residence accommodation by new and returning students, we anticipate a shortage of residence accommodation for next year. We are appealing to all staff members who have an unused spare room or other suitable 'digs' accommodation to consider letting it to students.

The University will pay rent directly to you in four equal installments should the student allocated to you be the recipient of financial aid from the University. Please contact me at the numbers below should you be able to assist.

Asst Dean of Students, Rhodes University, PO Box 94, Grahamstown, South Africa, 6140.
Tel: +27 (0)461 318188 (O); +27 (0)461 26491 (H);
Cell: 082 880 7815; Fax: +27 (0)461 23659
email: adil@giraffe.ru.ac.za

Biotechnological solutions to water salinity problems

Continued from page 9

Tanneries produce effluent which is would cause extreme pollution if released into river systems. For the past 30 years MWL have used waste stabilisation evaporation ponds to divert effluent flow from rivers. While these worked well, they showed some of the problems noted in these systems all over the world. These included accumulations of sludge and dissolved solids and, from time to time very bad smells.

The AIPS system provides a long-term solution to the problem of tannery wastewater.

The researchers at Rhodes, headed by Professor Peter Rose and Dr Oliver Hart, noticed rich blooms of a blue-green algae called *Spirulina* at certain times and in certain points in the ponding system. This led to research into whether this algae could be used to treat tannery effluent in the same way that has been designed and operated for sewage treatment. Other objectives of the research included dealing with the odour problem by converting the ponding system to aerobic status and reducing water consumption by treating the effluent to a standard where recycling to tanning operations became possible.

The ponds, once they were properly designed, have not only provided for water and nutrient cycling, but have also been used to produce animal feed. Microalgae play a

major role in wastewater treatment ponding systems by recycling nutrients, taking up carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus, reducing the nutrient load and producing oxygen for bacterial decomposition of organic matter. The Rhodes researchers used designs pioneered in the USA for treatment of sewage and food industry effluents, but which had not been used to treat tannery effluents.

The system at MWL uses a number of treatment steps, from an anaerobic digestion unit to an Algal High Rate Oxidation Ponding (HROP) raceway, which can provide reduction of organics, nitrogen and phosphate levels to surface water discharge standards.

The *Spirulina* biomass produced in the HROP is harvested, sun-dried and, after trials in the Rhodes University Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science (DIFS), has been developed into feed rations for abalone and rainbow trout farming. The novel abalone ration developed by Dr Peter Britz of the DIFS is now used by commercial abalone farmers.

The University's biotechnologists are also working on several other WRC-sponsored projects. These include the development of a process for producing beta-carotene from another inhabitant of tannery ponds, *Dunaliella salina*; evaluation of low-cost technology for sewage and abattoir effluent; and the further application of the system to the treatment of mine drainage waters.

Smalls

Accommodation wanted

Young, female professional seeking accommodation for 1998, in modern house in secure area. Non-smoking. Off-road parking. Phone Elizabeth at 311317 (h)

Politics Lecturer seeks 1 bedroom furnished flat/cottage from January 1998. Contact David Pottie, ext 8356, e-mail: podp@giraffe

Young lecturer seeks 2 or 3 bedroom house/cottage/flat in quiet area. Please contact Nick at: ext. 8244 or at home at 27 841.

Accommodation offered

BED and BREAKFAST. Self-contained flatlet, pool, private entrance. R55,00 p.p. Contact Sheryl-Anne Drennan at ext 8298/9 (a.m.); 27189 (h) or cell 082 657 0359

Kidds Beach Self-catering flatlet. Bedsitter with 1 double bed and fold-out two-seater couch; TV. Separate kitchen with double hotplate and fridge. Shower/toilet. Ideal for a couple with one or two children. R120 per night. Available for weekends and vacations. Some Dec/Jan dates still available. Phone 0431 811671 evenings

Fully furnished holiday flat to let in quiet, central prestigious suburb (Fresnaye/Sea Point). One bedroom with en suite bathroom, kitchen, spacious lounge and alcove for extra bed. Weekly rate R1250. Tel 021-4341453.

Miscellaneous

Housesitter available. January — April 1998. Conducting research in Geography Department. Contact Gina at g97zc008@giraffe

Would you like your house occupied over Christmas? We have family visiting who would be happy to look after your home/pets in return for accommodation. Contact Julia Goodwin tel (w) 318366 (h) 28176 or email j.goodwin@ru.ac.za

Farewell to Brenda Nicholls



Dr Brenda Nicholls (right) of the History Department receives a parting gift from Professor Paul Maylam at a farewell function held on 19 November.



THE MUSTARD
SEED

HEALTH
SHOP

A Slimming Menu. Are you too busy to plan, prepare and cook good food? Let us do this work for you. We offer healthy, tasty food and deliver it. We can cater for your specific dietary needs. Please contact the Mustard Seed at 311 496 or 311 174

Domestic worker available for two or three days a week. Joyce is highly reliable and an excellent worker. Please contact Lisl on 318569 or on e-mail: adlg@giraffe.ru.ac.za

Wanted: I should like to buy or hire a University of Natal PhD gown and hood. If you can help, please leave a message for Brenda Nicholls at 318 330 or ring me at Durban (031) 217 875