

*SOIL SCIENCE
SOCIETY OF SOUTH
AFRICA*



NEWSLETTER

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SSSSA COUNCIL/GVSA RAAD: 2017-19

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The SSSSA does not necessarily agree with opinions expressed in this newsletter.

Die GVSA onderskryf nie noodwendig die menings van bydraes tot sy nuusbrief nie.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/ BOODSKAP VAN DIE PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues/Beste kollegas,

"It's pretty scary to know how quickly time flies" (James Wan). I totally agree with James Wan; it is scary to realize how quickly time flies. The year is coming to an end! I would like to thank every member for his or her inputs, contributions and active participation to the Soil Science Society of South Africa (SSSSA) during the past year.



"Dit is nogal skrikwekkend om te weet hoe vinnig tyd vlieg" (James Wan). Ek stem heeltemal saam met James Wan; dit is skrikwekkend om werklik te besef hoe vinnig tyd vlieg. Die jaar is spoedig besig om tot 'n einde te kom! Ek wil graag elke lid bedank vir hul insette, bydraes en aktiewe deelname aan die Grondkunde Vereniging van Suid-Afrika (GVSA) gedurende die afgelope jaar.

The African Combined Congress will be held from 14 – 18 January 2018 at the Bridgeways Conference Venue (Ratanga Junction), Cape Town. The theme of the Congress is *"Sustainable agricultural systems for food security in Africa"*. The good news is that a total of 377 abstracts (233 orals; 144 posters) were submitted. This is going to be a very special event. For those who have not yet registered, I would like to encourage you to register (<http://combinedcongress.org.za/>) as soon as possible. This is the main annual event of our society and the sole opportunity for interaction with like-minded colleagues. I hope to see you there! Dr. Johan van Zyl is the SSSSA guest speaker and we are looking forward to his message. The soil science excursion will visit the Elsenburg Research Station near Klappmuts. Dr Cathy Clarke indicated that the high spatial variability of soils on this farm creates a great opportunity to see some diverse profiles and put the new soil classification system to the test. The ancient termite mounds, small hills and paleo-surfaces add to the complexity of the soils and should make for an interesting excursion with plenty of discussion. This sounds like an excursion not to be missed.

The 2019 Combined Congress will be held in Potchefstroom.

Die Afrika Gekombineerde Kongres sal vanaf 14 - 18 Januarie 2018 by die Bridgeways Konferensie Sentrum (Ratanga Junction), Kaapstad plaasvind. Die tema van die kongres is "Volhoubare landboustelsels vir voedselsekureit in Afrika". Die goeie nuus is dat 377 uitreksels (233 mondelinge aanbiedings, 144 plakkate) in total al ingedien is. Dit gaan 'n baie spesiale geleentheid wees. Vir diegene wat nog nie geregistreer het

nie, wil ek graag aanmoedig om so gou as moontlik (<http://combinedcongress.org.za/>) te registreer. Dit is die belangrikste jaarlikse gebeurtenis van ons vakvereniging en die enigste geleentheid vir interaksie met kollegas in dieselfde vakrigtings. Ek hoop om jou daar te sien! Dr. Johan van Zyl is die GVSA gasspreker en ons sien uit na sy boodskap. Die grondkunde ekskursie sal die Elsenburg navorsingstasie naby Klapmuts besoek. Dr. Cathy Clarke het aangedui dat die ruimtelike diversiteit van gronde op hierdie plaas 'n goeie geleentheid bied om verskeie uiteenlopende grondprofiële te sien en die nuwe grondklassifikasiesistelsel op die proef te stel. Die antieke termiethope, heuweltjies en palaeo-oppervlaktes dra by tot die kompleksiteit van die gronde en behoort vir 'n interessante uitstappie met baie bespreking te sorg. Dit klink soos 'n uitstappie wat nie gemis moet word nie.

Die 2019 Gekombineerde Kongres sal in Potchefstroom gehou word.

Thirty four (34) new members joined the SSSSA from the beginning of the year. I would like to welcome the new members and trust you will remain part of our society as well as to encourage you to be an active member. SSSSA membership information was not up to date and serious efforts were put in place to update our membership details. Unfortunately, the response was low; therefore, membership information remains problematic, which affects proper communication. The SSSSA board strive and are committed to serve soil science and its members, but without proper communication due to incorrect or outdated membership information, it is a challenge. A form for updating of membership information is included in the newsletter. All members who have not yet updated their information are kindly requested to complete and return the form as soon as possible. Members are also encouraged to send the form to colleagues who are members, but have relocated or moved to new positions. Current SSSSA members are also encouraged to persuade fellow soil scientists to become members. An application form is available on the SSSSA website (<http://www.soils.org.za/>). By doing so, you will help to promote your society and make it stronger.

Vier-en-dertig (34) nuwe lede het vanaf die begin van die jaar by die GVSA aangesluit. Ek verwelkom graag al ons nuwe lede en vertrou dat julle deel van ons vakvereniging sal bly en ek wil ieder en elk aanmoedig om 'n aktiewe lid te wees. Die GVSA lidmaatskapinligting was nie op datum nie en 'n ernstige poging om lidmaatskapbesonderhede op te dateer was aangewend. Ongelukkig was die reaksie swak; derhalwe bly lidmaatskapinligting problematies, wat behoorlike kommunikasie bemoeilik. Die GVSA raad streef daarna en is verbind om grondkunde as vakgebied en sy lede te dien, maar sonder behoorlike kommunikasie weens foutiewe of verouderde lidmaatskapinligting, is dit 'n uitdaging. 'n Vorm vir die opdatering van lidmaatskapinligting word in die nuusbrief ingesluit. Alle lede wat nie hul inligting opgedateer het nie, word versoek om die vorm so

spoedig moontlik in te vul en terug te stuur. Lede word ook aangemoedig om die vorms aan kollegas wat lede is, maar verhuis het of nuwe posisies beklee, te stuur. Huidige GVSA lede word ook aangemoedig om mede-grondkundiges te oorreed om lede te word. 'n Aansoekvorm is beskikbaar op die GVSA webtuiste (<http://www.soils.org.za/>). Deur dit te doen, sal u help om u vakvereniging te bevorder en dit sterker te maak.

Small changes need to be made to the Constitution of the SSSSA in order for the SSSSA, Southern African Plant and Soil Sciences Committee (SAPSSC) and each of the other three societies to be registered as a non-profit organization (NPO) for tax purposes. This is critical and unfortunately, there are no short cuts. It is a very long and tedious process. Suggested changes to the Constitution will be circulated to all SSSSA members, which will be discussed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) during January 2018. Therefore, as many as possible SSSSA members are encouraged to attend that AGM so that these changes can be finalized. If not enough members attend this meeting, the process will be delayed for another year! Please take note that Mrs. Nancy Nortje, the combined secretariat of SAPSSC, has moved office from the University of the Free State to her home and can be contacted at the following email address: ssssa.secretariat@gmail.com.

Minimale veranderinge moet aan die Grondwet van die GVSA aangebring word sodat die GVSA, Plant- en Grond Wetenskappe Komitee (SAPGWK) en die ander drie vakverenigings vir belastingdoeleindes as 'n nie-winsgewende organisasie geregistreer kan word. Dit is krities en ongelukkig is daar geen kortpaaie nie. Dit is 'n baie lang en tydrowende proses. Voorgestelde wysigings aan die Grondwet sal aan alle GVSA lede versprei word, wat in Januarie 2018 by die Algemene Jaarvergadering (AJV) bespreek sal word. Soveel as moontlik GVSA lede word derhalwe aangemoedig om die AJV by te woon sodat hierdie veranderinge afgehandel kan word. Indien nie genoeg lede hierdie vergadering bywoon nie, sal die proses met nog 'n jaar vertraag word. Neem asseblief kennis dat Mev. Nancy Nortje, die gesamentlike sekretariaat van SAPGWK, se kantoor van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat na haar huis verskuif het en kan gekontak word by die volgende e-pos adres: ssssa.secretariat@gmail.com.

The South African Journal of Plant and Soil (SAJPS) belongs to the members of the four societies, and therefore our continuous support is critical and benefits all our society members. One of the aims of SSSSA is "the obtaining and dissemination of knowledge, information and ideas having relevance to soil science by means of discussion and publication" which directly relates to the SAJPS. Therefore, SSSSA members are invited and encouraged to publish in SAJPS and regularly quote past SAJPS references in their publications. This is the only way to raise the ISI status of the journal, which is very important for its advancement.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Joernaal vir Plant en Grond (SAJPG) behoort aan die lede van die vier vakverenigings en daarom is ons voortgesette ondersteuning krities en bevoordeel al ons lede van die vakvereniging. Een van die doelwitte van die GVSA is "die verkryging en verspreiding van kennis, inligting en idees wat op grondkunde betrekking het by wyse van samesprekings en publikasies" wat direk met die SAJPG verband hou. Daarom word GVSA lede uitgenooi en aangemoedig om in die SAJPG te publiseer en gereeld na vorige publikasies in die SAJPG te verwys. Dit is die enigste manier om die ISI status van die tydskrif te verhoog, wat baie belangrik is vir sy bevordering.

It seems that most hurdles regarding the process and cost involved having events registered at SACNASP for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points have been overcome. The African Combined Congress, which is scheduled to take place in January 2018 will be registered as a valid event at SACNASP that will enable members to start earning CPD points. A slot has been allocated to a SACNASP representative to make an oral presentation at the Congress. I would like to encourage members not to miss this presentation.

Dit blyk dat die meeste struikelblokke, rakende die proses en koste wat verband hou met geleenthede wat by SACNASP vir Voortgesette Professionele Ontwikkeling (VPO) punte geregistreer is, oorkom is. Die Afrika Gekombineerde Kongres wat geskeduleer is om plaas te vind gedurende Januarie 2018 sal as 'n geldige geleentheid by SACNASP geregistreer word wat lede in staat sal stel om VPO punte te verdien. 'n SACNASP verteenwoordiger sal tydens die Kongres 'n mondelinge aanbieding maak. Ek wil lede aanmoedig om nie hierdie aanbieding te mis nie.

Our website and Facebook, in particular, are very active with more than 2100 likes. I want to encourage members to visit our website (<http://www.soils.org.za/>) and Facebook for more information on the wonderful world of soils in all its facets. Notices about upcoming events and happenings are regularly placed on the web and Facebook.

Ons webtuiste en Facebook, in die besonder, is baie aktief met meer as 2100 "likes". Ek wil lede aanmoedig om ons webwerf (<http://www.soils.org.za/>) en Facebook te besoek vir meer inligting oor die wonderwêreld van grond in alle fasette. Kennisgewings rakende opkomende gebeurtenisse en aktiwiteite word gereeld op die web en Facebook geplaas.

Soil-related organizations and companies will in future have the opportunity and benefit to advertise, market and reach a selected group of people through the SSSSA distribution/ mailing list, the newsletter as well as the web page. More information will be available at a later stage.

Grondverwante organisasies en maatskappye sal in die toekoms die geleentheid en voordeel hê om te adverteer en bemark deur die GVSA verspreiding / poslys, die nuusbrieff sowel as die webblad en sodoende 'n geselekteerde groep mense bereik. Meer inligting sal later beskikbaar gestel word.

I would like to congratulate our new honorary members, Dr Danie Beukes, Prof Eben Verster and Prof Theo van Rooyen, on their achievement. Prof van Rooyen was absent during the Combined Congress held at Bela-Bela during January 2017 and will receive his award during the African Combined Congress in January 2018. I would also like to congratulate Oom Hendrik Pistorius who celebrated his 100th birthday on 29 August 2017 (see article in this Newsletter).

Ek wil ons nuwe erelede, Dr Danie Beukes, Prof Eben Verster en Prof Theo van Rooyen, gelukwens met hul prestasie. Prof van Rooyen was afwesig tydens die Gekombineerde Kongres wat gehou is in Bela-Bela gedurende Januarie 2017 en sal sy toekenning tydens die Afrika Gekombineerde Kongres in Januarie 2018 ontvang. Ek wil ook Oom Hendrik Pistorius gelukwens wat sy 100ste verjaardag op 29 Augustus 2017 gevier het (sien berig in hierdie Nuusbrieff).

Finally, Michael Altshuler said: "The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot". Therefore, I wish that the remaining part of 2017 and the first half of 2018 will be an exciting and productive period for all of us, where we will be responsible soil pilots. I want to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous 2018.

Laastens, Michael Altshuler het gesê: "Die slegte nuus is tyd vlieg. Die goeie nuus is dat jy die vlieënier is." Derhalwe is my wens dat die oorblywende deel van 2017 en die eerste helfte van 2018 'n opwindende en produktiewe tydperk vir almal van ons sal wees, waar ons die verantwoordelike grond vlieënier sal wees. Ek wens u en u gesin 'n Geseënde Kersfees en 'n Voorspoedige 2018 toe.

Warmest regards/Beste wense

Cobus Botha
(082 414 4386; BothaC@arc.agric.za)

EDITORIAL/REDAKSIONEEL

I am constantly amazed how little consideration people give to the soil beneath our feet. Whether it be a Government Department that allocates a piece of land without any thought to the suitability or carrying capacity, or someone who buys a farm and then wants to know what soils are present (akin to buying a car without going for a test drive!), the soil always seems to come last.



One of the great problems in soil science today is the lack of experienced soil surveyors. As anyone who has done it will know, due to the infinite complexity and variety of soils out there, surveying and proper classification is not something that can be mastered in a few weeks. Rather think of years! Many of the more experienced soil surveyors in South Africa are in the “mature” category, and the flow of graduates who have actually done any sort of auger-turning is becoming less. With many soil investigations potentially involving decisions that have important consequences (up to and including possible legal actions), it is vital that we don’t lose the capacity to properly describe, classify and use the soils that we have.

Please don’t forget to send in some great photos of soils – our **Soils Photo Competition** is back (details on the next page). Many thanks to Ruth Rhodes for organizing the competition and to AGT Foods for their sponsorship.

See you at the Combined Congress in Cape Town.

Regards,

Garry Paterson

(012 310 2601; 083 556 2458; garry@arc.agric.za)

COUNCIL MATTERS/RAADSAANGELEENTHEDE



AGT Foods Africa Beauty of Soils Photography Competition – 2017

In 2014, SSSSA members wowed us with their beautiful photographs of African soils. We're doing it again! Get snapping and ENTER NOW!

We invite all SSSSA members to submit their most beautiful digital photos of African soils.

- Categories for entry:
 - Soils in landscape / agriculture
 - Soils: close up
 - People/animals and Soils
- Winners in each category will receive their certificates at the Combined Congress, Cape Town, January 2018.
- Top entries will be featured on the SSSSA website, newsletter and Facebook page, and displayed at the Combined Congress 2018.

Rules and Guidelines:

If you are an SSSSA member, you should already have received notification of this competition via e-mail. If you haven't, please send your enquiry to:

Ruth Rhodes (ruth@avorcane.co.za) – who will send you the full list of rules, guidelines and requirements for your submission.

SSSSA Shirts!



You either have one, and love it... or you've seen someone else's... and loved it... Either way, you want one of these stylish, smart but comfortable SSSSA branded shirts

The Good News is, we're bringing back this SSSSA favourite!

The Even Better News is, we're subsidising the price!.... Only R200 per shirt for SSSSA members. (full value: R350). **You SAVE R150!**

Please send your order to Ruth Rhodes (ruth@avorcane.co.za), along with the following details:

Full name	E-mail address	Cell phone number	Men's / Ladies'	Size (S-5XL)	Number of shirts	Line Cost (@R200/shirt)

T's & C's:

- Shirts will only be available for collection at the Combined Congress in Cape Town, January 2018. If you can't be there - ask a friend to collect yours.
- **Closing date for orders: 25th November 2017.**
- Online bank payment (EFT) is preferred. Send proof of payment along with shirt order. Cash payments are discouraged, but will be accepted if EFT is not possible for you. Pay at the SSSSA table at the Combined Congress in 2018.

Banking Details:

Soil Science Society SA

Branch: Standard Bank Castle Walk

Branch code: 014645

Acc No: 411 241 109

Reference: Initials and surname (e.g. S. Dlamini).

APPOINTMENTS/AANSTELLINGS

Dr Garry Paterson has been appointed as Research Team Manager: Soil Science at ARC-Institute for Soil, Climate and Water. He was previously acting in the position for the past year.

MOVEMENTS/BEWEGINGS

Nicky Mushia has resigned from ARC-ISCW to take up a post with Department of Land Reform and Rural Development in Bisho, Eastern Cape.

SOIL SCIENTISTS ABROAD/GRONDKUNDIGES OORSEE

Dr Johan van Tol, of the University of the Free State, attended the African Groundwater Network meeting in Entebbe, Uganda from 29 – 31st of August 2017. This was also the launch of the African Groundwater/Surface water interaction research group. The photo below shows Johan at the source of the Nile in Jinja, Uganda.



Prof Cornie van Huyssteen (University of the Free State) and **Dr Johan van der Waals** (TerraSoil Science) attended a WRB workshop in Latvia and Estonia from 22 to 27 July 2017.

The workshop took place at Riga (the capital of Latvia), proceeded to western Latvia and the Baltic coast, then went east and eventually north into Estonia, finishing at Tallin (the capital of Estonia).

A total of 23 profiles were observed, that varied from Podzols, to Gleysols, and Histosols. The lasting impression, though, was how hundreds of hectares of Histosols (somewhat akin to the South African Champagne form) are drained to enable arable agriculture. This drainage obviously results in aeration and resultant degradation and carbon release from these soils.

The photo shows Cornie van Huyssteen (on left), along with other participants, classifying one of the soil pits on the excursion.



DEGREES AWARDED/GRADE TOEGEKEN

The following people received M.Sc. Soil Science degrees during the spring graduation of the University of the Free State:

- Anna Margarietha Verster
- Judith Edeh
- Kevin Fourie
- Portia Phohlo
- Leon Francois van Straaten

AWARDS/TOEKENINGS

Eskom Expo 2017

At the recent Eskom Expo, held in Kempton Park from 3rd to 6th October, SSSSA once again sponsored two awards for the best soil-related project, one for junior learners and one for senior learners. The quality was as usual very impressive!

In the junior category, the winner was Christian Beerwinkel (Gr. 8), from Cape Town, for his project “Factors that influence water retention, fertility and pH”, while the senior winner was Martha Djan (Gr. 11), from Potchefstroom, for her project “Indigenous rehabilitation of mine soils in Krugersdorp”.



**SSSSA Award winners at Eskom Expo:
Christian Beerwinkel (left) and Martha Djan (right)**

Awardees of IUSS Awards in 2018

Three awards are presented by the IUSS at each World Congress of Soil Science to recognize outstanding contributions in three areas:

- IUSS *Dokuchaev Award* for basic research in soil science
- IUSS *Liebig Award* for applied research in soil science
- IUSS *Jeju Award* for a young or mid-career soil scientist

At the World Congress of Soil Science in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in August 2018, **John Ryan**, Soil Science Consultant based in Ireland, received the Liebig Award. John Ryan's entire career, spanning over 50 years, has been dedicated to the advancement of applied soil science and to implementation of his research findings to increase food production and alleviate rural poverty.

The Dokuchaev Award was presented to **Johan Bouma**, Emeritus Professor of Soil Science, Wageningen University, the Netherlands. Prof Bouma is known for the functional characterization of soils, emphasizing use of data from soil surveys to improve soil physical characterization of soils, now referred to as hydropedology.

John McLean Bennett, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Southern Queensland in Australia, received the Jeju Award. Dr Bennett is a soil physico-chemist with globally recognized expertise in soil structure. His research has focused on water quality interactions with soil physical and chemical mechanisms.

CONGRESSES/KONGRESSE

COMBINED CONGRESS

The next Combined Congress will be held at Ratanga Junction, Cape Town from 15th to 18th January 2018, in conjunction with the African Crop Science Society. The first announcement has already appeared, and members are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

More information at www.combinedcongress.org.za

ICWEES 2018

The International Conference on Water, Environment, Energy and Society is being organized jointly by the Institut des Regions Arides, Tunisia, AISECT University, India, and Texas A&M University, USA, from 8th to 11th May 2018 in Djerba Island, Tunisia.

Interested authors are requested to submit one or more abstracts, for oral or poster presentation, of their research papers, on any of the following themes (and subthemes):

1. Water resources.
2. Environment.
3. Energy.
4. Societies and Development.
5. Geo-Information and Remote Sensing Technologies.

Conference website: <http://www.icwees2018.tn/>

Email: info@icwees2018.tn

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/icwees2018>

10th International Symposium on Plant-Soil Interactions at Low pH 2018 (PSILPH2018)

Putrajaya, Malaysia, 25-29 June 2018. The symposium's core objective is to address issues related to food production on low pH soil, and at the same time, achieving sustainability. 10th PSILPH2018 aims to gather researchers, scientists, experts and academicians in the field of soil sciences to share their latest research findings and thoughts on the

current status of agriculture production; thus, ensuring food security and environmental sustainability. Abstract submission deadline: 30th November 2017.

Read more: <http://www.psilph2018.com/>

MISCELLANEOUS/ALGEMEEN

News from Stellenbosch University October 2017

The internationally acclaimed soil scientist **Professor Donald Sparks** visited the Department of Soil Science in October. As author of one of the mainstream soil chemistry textbooks, Donald Sparks is a “household” name to many soil scientists and geochemists. In addition to writing three definitive books on soil chemistry and reaction kinetics, he has also edited 112 books and has authored or co-authored 58 book chapters and 262 peer-reviewed articles. He has recently received the Geochemistry Medal from the American Chemical Society and the Clay Minerals Society’s Pioneer in Clay Science Award. He has also served as president of The Soil Science Society of America and the International Union of Soil Science

In his talk entitled: ‘The Nexus Between Soil, Water, Food and Climate: The Big Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century’ he highlighted the pivotal role that soil science has to play in combating major challenges facing the globe, including climate change, clean water and food security.



Photo: (From left to right Danie Brink, Donald Sparks, Cathy Clarke and Eduard Hoffman)

CENTURY FOR OOM HENDRIK PISTORIUS

by Giel Laker

On the 29th August 2017, the Soil Science Society of South Africa witnessed a very special moment in its history. On that day Oom (“Uncle”) Hendrik Pistorius, for decades a very prominent and active person in the SSSSA and the South African soil science community in general, celebrated his 100th birthday. His birthday was celebrated with a function at the Kleinkaap Boutique Hotel in Centurion. It was attended by a large number of guests, amongst whom were several members of the SSSSA. I was in a very privileged and honoured position, as Leo, Oom Hendrik’s son who organized the function, invited me to make a speech and Cobus Botha, SSSSA President, requested me to congratulate Oom Hendrik on behalf of the Society and to present him a birthday gift and two awards from the Society to him.

The birthday gift consisted of a coffee mug and a pen, both with the Society’s logo on them. The *SSSSA Council* decided to present him with a certificate of gratitude for his sustained support over many years at this special milestone. Council also decided to award a special Silver Medal to Oom Hendrik at this momentous occasion in recognition of his sustained support over many years. Oom Hendrik appreciated the medal very highly and at one stage specially asked to be returned to the main function room so that he could hold his medal in his hands. All Oom Hendrik’s children much appreciated the awarding of the medal to their father.

I did not have a written speech and I presented it in Afrikaans, but as I remember (and translated into English) it went something like this:

“Good evening Oom Hendrik and everybody present. It is my great privilege and honour to congratulate Oom on behalf of the Soil Science Society of South Africa on reaching of this special milestone. We wish Oom truckloads of joy, happiness and fun for the second century. The Society believes that Oom Hendrik will still drink a lot of coffee and write a lot, so it was decided to give Oom a coffee mug and a pen, both embossed with the logo of the Society, as birthday present.

Oom Hendrik was an icon in South Africa’s soil science community. Rianto van Antwerpen, previous SSSSA President, called him a “giant” in South Africa’s soil science and so the Council of the Soil Science Society has decided to present a certificate to Oom Hendrik to thank him for his sustained support over many years.

Oom Hendrik was unique in the sense that he, as industrialist, was an active member of the Soil Science Society and attended its congresses so as to stay informed about the latest findings that were important for his industry. (Interjection for those who may not know: Oom Hendrik’s company, H. Pistorius & Co, is a big producer of agricultural lime and related products. In the lime field, one knew that there was Oom Hendrik and others.) He also made presentations at our congresses so as to keep all of us on our toes

regarding the absolute importance of agricultural lime for sustained high levels of production on our higher potential acidic soils in high rainfall areas.

Oom Hendrik also put his hand deep in his pocket for soil science and the Soil Science Society. I checked again yesterday and confirmed that he was one of the main sponsors for a number of congresses of the Society. We all know that research is expensive, but Oom Hendrik also funded research on aspects related to agricultural lime and the liming of soils. Last night Johan van der Waals, our literally “biggest” soil scientist (in terms of physical size!) confirmed to me that Oom Hendrik funded his whole master’s research, just as one example. This giant of a man told me that he would be Oom Hendrik’s main cheerleader tonight.

In view of all this, the Council of the Soil Science Society has decided to award a special Silver Medal to Oom Hendrik in recognition of his sustained support over many years at this exceptional milestone in his life. It must be understood that the Soil Science Society does not award silver medals lightly. In the history of the Society only 14 Silver Medals have been awarded, the last one in 2008. (According to the SSSSA website.) So, to receive a Silver Medal from the Society is a big honour.”



Giel Laker presenting Oom Hendrik’s Silver Medal from the SSSSA to him, with Heidi, Oom Hendrik’s eldest daughter, in attendance



Theo, Oom Hendrik's proud eldest child, congratulating his father with his Silver Medal, with Giel Laker and Jeffrey, Oom Hendrik's caregiver, in attendance

SOIL CLASSIFICATION WORKING GROUP

The Working Group, under the technical co-ordination of Dr Dave Turner (assisted by Dr Garry Paterson), is currently busy finalizing the revised edition of the Soil Classification Book. The text of the book is virtually complete, while the final task is to collect photographs to illustrate soil profiles, soil horizons and diagnostic features.

Arrangements are being made to commence with preparation and printing. Once it has gone through the final editing phases, the aim is to have the book available for the start of the 2018 academic year.

There will be a presentation at the upcoming Combined Congress and the soils excursion to Elsenburg will also address some of the issues of the new edition.

First-ever global erosivity map shows areas most vulnerable to erosion

Understanding erosion is important in quantifying the loss of topsoil for agriculture, as well as the contamination of food and water by sediments. However, erosion is a very complex process. It depends on many factors, including climate, soil type, and vegetation cover. A new map, published in an open-access paper, tries to quantify how much energy is available to erode the land surface on a given spot globally.

Read more: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidbressan/2017/08/18/how-many-continents-are-there/#efe36866732f>

Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas Website now available

A joint venture from the Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative and the European Commission Joint Research Commission, the Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas is the first synthesis of global soil biodiversity research and its importance to our living world. Download it for free or order the full Atlas at €25.

Read more: <https://atlas.globalsoilbiodiversity.org/>

COAL MINE RESEARCH CONTINUES

Following the previous Coaltech project looking at the stockpiling of soils on open-cast coal mines, and the on-going project looking at the microbiological aspects of the stockpiling and rehabilitation process, Coaltech has funded a third project through ARC-ISCW. This project will be in conjunction with the CSIR and will look at the efficiency of Ground Penetrating radar (GPR) in establishing the depth of cover soil in rehab areas, across varying conditions, such as soil texture and moisture content.

The project will start early in 2018 and run for two years. Project leader Garry Paterson looked at GPR for his MSc back in 1998 and in conjunction with Dr Michael van Schoor, from CSIR, believes that GPR can make a valuable contribution to improving the rehab processes after coal mining has completed.

HUMOUR

The Wife

A police officer pulls over a speeding car. The officer says, ' I clocked you at 150 kph, sir.'

The driver says, 'But officer, I had it on cruise control at 120, perhaps your radar gun needs calibrating.'

Not looking up from her knitting, the wife says: 'Now don't be silly dear, you know that this car doesn't have cruise control.'

As the officer writes out the ticket, the driver looks over at his wife and growls, 'Can't you please keep your mouth shut for once?'

The wife smiles demurely and says, 'You should just be thankful your radar detector went off when it did.'

As the officer makes out the second ticket for the illegal radar detector unit, the man glowers at his wife and says through clenched teeth, 'Damn it, woman, can't you keep your mouth shut?'

The officer frowns and says, 'And I notice that you're not wearing your seat belt, sir. That's an automatic R750 fine.'

The driver says, 'Yeah, well, you see officer, I had it on, but took it off when you pulled me over so that I could get my license out of my back pocket.'

The wife says, 'Now, dear, you know very well that you didn't have your seat belt on. You never wear your seat belt when you're driving.'

And as the police officer is writing out the third ticket the driver turns to his wife and barks, 'WHY DON'T YOU SHUT UP!!??'

The officer looks over at the woman and asks, 'Does your husband always talk to you this way, Ma'am?'

'Only when he's had too much to drink.'

SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA: MISSION

The SSSSA is a scientific society, which, in the interest of its members, promotes the advancement of soil science and soil technology as well as the responsible practising thereof by its members with the view to the long-term sustainable utilization of the environment in the interest of the community.

Aims

1. Promotion and protection of the professional status and prestige of soil science as a science and career.
2. Promotion and extension of the society.
3. Promotion of the standard of training of soil scientists and technologists.
4. Creation of opportunities for the free exchange of ideas on soil science and technology.
5. The obtaining and dissemination of knowledge, information and ideas having relevance to soil science by means of discussion and publication.
6. Promotion of contact between the society and other bodies with common or similar interests, both within South Africa and overseas.

GRONDKUNDEVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA: MISSIE

Die GVSA is 'n wetenskaplike vereniging wat in belang van sy lede verbind is tot die bevordering van grondkundige wetenskap en tegnologie, en die verantwoordelike beoefening daarvan deur sy lede met die oog op die lang termyn volhoubare benutting van die omgewing in belang van die gemeenskap.

Doelstellings

1. Bevordering en beskerming van die professionele status en aansien van grondkunde as 'n wetenskaplike beroep.
2. Bevordering en uitbouing van die vereniging.
3. Bevordering van die standaard van opleiding van grondkundige wetenskaplikes en -tegnoloë.
4. Skepping van geleenthede vir vrye gedagtewisseling oor grondkundige wetenskap en tegnologie.
5. Die verkryging en verspreiding van kennis, inligting en idees wat op grondkunde betrekking het by wyse van samesprekings en publikasies.
6. Bevordering van skakeling tussen die vereniging en ander liggame met gemeenskaplike of soortgelyke belange, beide in Suid-Afrika en in die buiteland.