

PARSA

Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 9
January
2012



Message from the editor

Dear PARSA Members

Hope you have all had a good holiday and are ready for what promises to be a very exciting year ahead!

This year, PARSA will be held at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, with the preliminary dates of 1–2 October 2012. The first announcement will be sent out later on in the year with more detailed information but please keep that date in mind.

Please send through information to be distributed in the next newsletter. It can be as little as one paragraph or a couple of pages on any newsworthy story (examples include: current or future projects, research notes, awards, conferences both past and upcoming, workshops, reviews etc). Please send through news items by end of March.

Just a friendly reminder to ensure your PARSA account is paid up too. Invoices will be sent out soon and any accounts more than 3 years in arrears will be terminated.

Also, can I ask you to please let us know if any of your contact details have changed? We are trying to update the PARSA member list but some of the information is outdated and many of the email address in particular are invalid. You can send the updated information to either Andrea Spickett (spicketta@arc.agric.za) or me (ecology@uj.ac.za). We thank you in advance for this!

Have a fantastic 2012!!

Kind regards

Kerry



Dear PARSA member:

I trust that you had a pleasant break from work during the festive season, and started the new year with great enthusiasm.

Although generating a profit is of course not the primary aim when organising PARSA's annual congresses, running up a deficit is not sustainable either! I am happy to report that last year's joint meeting with ZSSA in Stellenbosch generated in excess of R16,000 for PARSA. The committee had agreed to sponsor the travel costs of plenary speaker Dr Felicia Keesing from the USA. In the end this was not necessary, as registration income was sufficient to cover the costs.

The Department of Zoology at the University of the Free State is celebrating its centenary this year. Congratulations! PARSA's congress will be held in Bloemfontein as part of the centenary celebrations. The preliminary dates are 1–2 October 2012. We look forward to a bumper programme drawn up by Prof Jo van As and his team.

Prof Nico Smit has offered to organise PARSA 2013 at the Potchefstroom campus of North West University.

In 2014, PARSA will be hosting an **International Conference on Parasites of Wildlife** at the new conference centre in Skukuza, Kruger National Park. The preliminary booking is for the last week of July 2014. The 8th Tick & Tick-borne Pathogen Conference will also be held in South Africa in 2014. A proposal has been made that it should be held back-to-back with the Wildlife Parasite Conference. This will make it easy for delegates from abroad to attend both conferences.

This is probably the first time ever that PARSA's programme has been finalised three years in advance!

Regards

Banie Penzhorn
President



Prof Banie Penzhorn
(President: PARSA)

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Next Issue...

For the next issue we are looking for the following contributions:

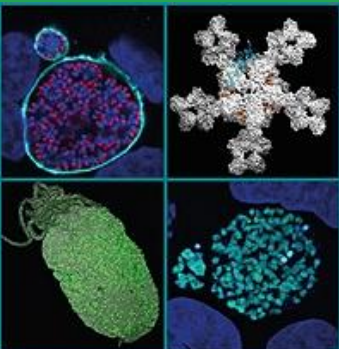
- Feature articles on research being done in your institute (with photos).
- Summary on the life and work of a respected and well-known parasitologist.
- Student abstracts from across southern Africa conveying the various research being done on parasites in Africa.
- Reviews and photos of the parasitological conferences and workshops attended.
- News to be distributed including job and bursary opportunities, post-graduate project opportunities and awards won by our PARSA members.

Due: March 2012

Please note...

Please note that most of this information is also available on the PARSA website as well as some additional information not present here. Check it out at:

www.parsa.ac.za.



2012 Conferences

IV International *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* Conference

30 January – 3 February 2012

Wellington, New Zealand

The aim of the conference is to promote dialogue and facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between geographically disperse groups involved in research and practice pertaining to these parasites.

<http://www.cryptogiardia2012.org>

8th Annual BioMalPar Conference - Biology and Pathology of the Malaria Parasite

14 May – 16 May 2012

EMBL Heidelberg, Germany

The purpose of this conference is to bring together malaria researchers from Europe and overseas to share their research on malaria. The scientific aims are to address fundamental questions of the biology of the malaria parasite, its vector. Registration is now open.

<http://www.embl.de/training/events/2012/BMP12-01/>

Colloquium Crustacea Decapoda Mediterranea

3 June – 7 June 2012

Athens, Greece

The Crustacean Society invites submissions of papers for oral and poster presentation and proposals for Symposia topics at its Annual Conference jointly hosted with the Colloquium Crustacea Decapoda Mediterranea in June 2012, in Athens – GREECE. The event will place particular emphasis on innovating research from all areas of crustacean science including systematics, taxonomy, evolution, phylogeny, ecology, behaviour, sociobiology, development and larval biology, physiology, symbiosis, parasitology, genetics, molecular biology, biogeography, fossils and ichnology, taphonomy, palaeobiology, conservation and introduced species.

<http://www.cssm2012.gr/>

American Society of Parasitologists, 87th Annual Meeting

12 July – 17 July 2012

Richmond, Virginia

The site for our 87th annual meeting is a history buff's mecca. Virginia is the birthplace of many of our country's founding fathers, including 8 U.S. presidents, notably George Washington, our first president, and Thomas Jefferson, our third president and the principal writer of the Declaration of Independence. Richmond, the state capital and our host city, also has a history as storied as the state. Anchorage is the largest city in Alaska with a population of over 260,000. As always, the scientific program will offer a diverse array of paper and poster sessions as well as several symposia for your enjoyment.

<http://asp.unl.edu/> or email asp.meeting@gmail.com

31th International Symposium of the European Society of Nematologists

23 September - 27 September 2012

Adana, Turkey

The annual symposium will be held in Turkey in 2012. Adana is located in the East Mediterranean region of Turkey and has always been an important agricultural area of Turkey as well as a region with fascinating geography, history and culture. More information will be posted on the website. The registration deadline will be 15th April 2012.

<http://www.esn-online.org>

Research Awards

Dr. Maureen Coetzee

Wits School of Pathology

- Prof. Maureen Coetzee, Director, Malaria Entomology Research Unit, Wits School of Pathology, was among the winners at the African Union Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Awards. These awards honour great scientific achievement and contribution through science for the socio-economic development of Africa. The awards ceremony was held at the African Union Commission Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 14th December 2011. Her award was for Regional Women Scientists in recognition of outstanding achievements in science and technology.
- She is due to receive yet another award on the 27th of February 2012 from the American Mosquito Control Association – the John N. Belkin Memorial Award for exceptional contribution to systematics and biology of African mosquitoes. The award will be presented at the Association's 78th annual meeting in Austin, Texas.



Research Notes

Prof. Miles Markus

University of the Witwatersrand

In the 1970s, Professor Miles Markus (University of the Witwatersrand) correctly predicted that a “hypnozoite” stage (he coined the term) would be found to be part of the malarial parasite’s life cycle. Hypnozoites are thought to give rise to relapse in particular types of malaria. He has now raised the question of whether there could be a second source of recurring *Plasmodium vivax* malaria, a clinical phenomenon that has intrigued and puzzled humans for millennia. Recent research results suggest that latent merozoites might be a cause.

References: Markus, M.B. 2011. Origin of recurrent *Plasmodium vivax* malaria – a new theory. *South African Medical Journal* 101: 682–4; Markus, M.B. 2012. Dormancy in mammalian malaria. *Trends in Parasitology* 28: 39–45.

Figures:

1. Trophozoites of *Plasmodium falciparum*, which is responsible for cerebral malaria. The occurrence of quiescent merozoites in the life cycle of *P. falciparum* is a probability that needs to be investigated. *Photo: Prof. J.A. Freen.*
2. Trophozoite of *Plasmodium ovale*. The presence in a thin blood film of a number of irregularly-shaped host red blood cells such as the one depicted here is a feature of *P. ovale* infection that is important diagnostically. It has been assumed that *P. ovale* is a relapsing malaria parasite. However, the existence of a hypnozoite stage in its life cycle is anecdotal and has not (yet) been scientifically demonstrated. *Photo: Prof. J.A. Freen.*
3. *Plasmodium vivax*, the cause of relapsing benign tertian malaria. Infected erythrocytes become enlarged and stippling is evident in the host cells. *Photo: Prof. J.A. Freen.*
4. The characteristic crescentic gametocyte of *Plasmodium falciparum*. Gametocytes initiate infection in the mosquito vector. Dormant stages of malaria parasites are obstacles to the eradication of malaria (since 2007, the new ultimate goal of malarial research) because their activation leads to production of gametocytes which, in turn, results in renewed transmission of malaria in human populations. *Photo: Prof. J.A. Freen.*

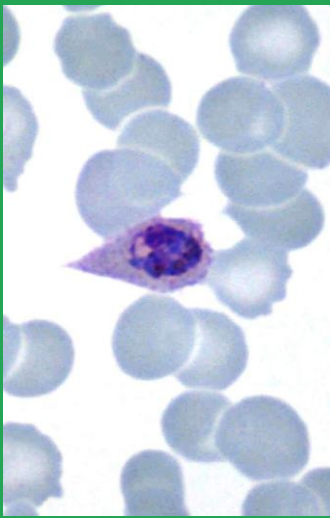


Fig. 2

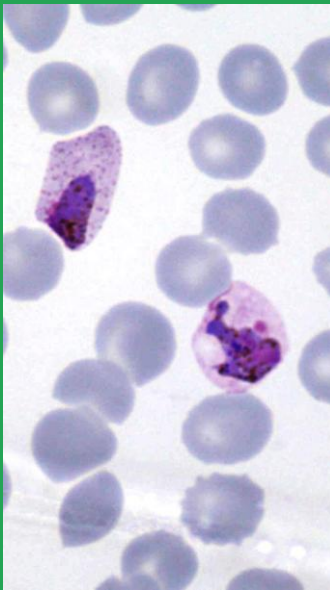


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

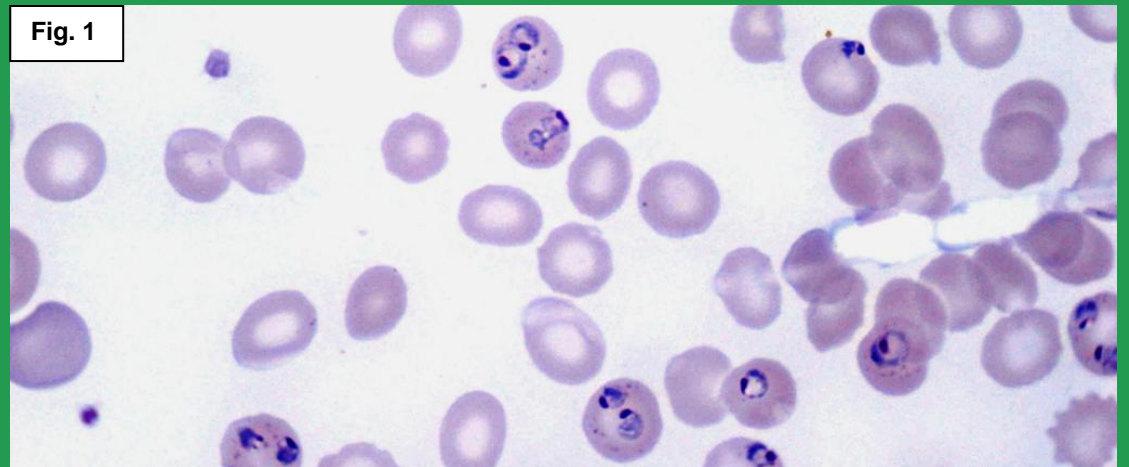


Fig. 1

Call for Applications – 2012

Junior and Senior WO Neitz Award (annual)

The Parasitological Society of Southern Africa confers two awards annually for a postgraduate (MSc and PhD) thesis in parasitology. In short, the MSc or PhD thesis must have been accepted within the last 18 months by a tertiary institution. Each thesis must be accompanied by a nomination in writing by the candidate's supervisor or Head of Department. The deadline for nominations is **14 April 2012**. For further information contact the PARSA Secretary, Dr. Marinda C. Oosthuizen, at marinda.oosthuizen@up.ac.za or +27 (0)12 529-8390.

Elsdon-Dew Medal (annual)

The Parasitological Society of Southern Africa (PARSA) awards this medal on merit to individuals who add valuable contributions to parasitology in Africa. Motivated nominations, with a detailed curriculum vitae (4 copies), are called for and should be submitted confidentially to the PARSA secretary. Documents may be submitted before **5 May 2012** to the PARSA Secretary, Dr. Marinda C. Oosthuizen at marinda.oosthuizen@up.ac.za or +27 (0)12 529-8390.

WO Neitz Memorial Scholarship (for postgraduate study abroad)

The Wilhelm Neitz Memorial Trust was created to assist South African nationals or permanent residents for post-graduate study in parasitology at institutions abroad. Honours, master's doctoral and post-doctoral study will qualify. As the amount available will not cover the total costs of study abroad, it is imperative that applicants should seek other sources of funding, e.g. NRF bursaries.

Applications should include the following:

1. A curriculum vitae
2. A certified academic record, including undergraduate studies
3. Detailed outline of the field of study or research project
4. Letter of support by employer or most recent academic supervisor
5. Details of how the proposed study will be financed.

Applications should be sent to:

Prof. Banie L. Penzhorn
Tel: +27 (0)12 529-8253
Fax: +27 (0)12 529-8312
Email: banie.penzhorn@up.ac.za

Deadline for applications is 28 July 2012.
Incomplete applications will not be considered.

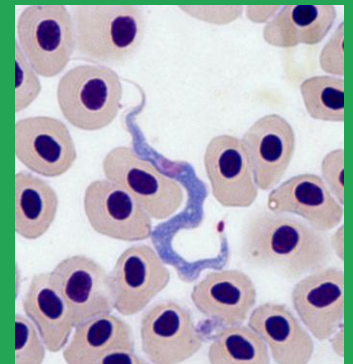
PARSA Application

The application form for new members is available on the PARSA website or from the PARSA secretary. The current joining fees are R80 per member thereafter it is R100 per year to maintain membership.

The application form can be sent to the PARSA secretary:

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Members

The Parasitology Society of Southern Africa currently has 139 members from around the world. Memberships of members that are 3 years in arrears will be terminated.