



# NEWS

## October

### 2009



#### **News from Katy Lannas, SAWISE-Angus scholarship winner in 2005**

I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne. My thesis falls under a broader project called Mountland which is investigating sustainable management practices in mountainous systems.

The focus is on ecosystem dynamics under global climate change and under different potential socio-economic and political scenarios. I am looking at historical land use change in the Jura Mountains in Switzerland and then developing a model of vegetation dynamics in silvopastoral systems. Within the Jura Mountains wooded pastures (see background in pic) are a unique habitat type that have developed as a result of integrated management practices of grazing and forestry over hundreds of years. Wooded pastures have high biodiversity and can offer a high economic return by combining these two land use activities. I am therefore investigating how this habitat type can be maintained under climate change and which management practices would be optimal for the future.

#### **News from Dr. Diane Wilcox, Chair of SAWISE-Gauteng**

Diane attended the 44th meeting of the Women in International Science Project. A group of 44 scholars travelled from 11 countries to meet in Potomac, Maryland, USA to share and exchange knowledge on chemistry, computer science and mathematics, and addressed how to increase the participation of women in chemistry, computer science and mathematics and statistics.

The NACI “**Facing the Facts**” booklet (which provides facts and figures about WIS in SA) was launched in Cape Town by Minister Naledi Pandor on the 25 August 2009. [www.naci.org.za](http://www.naci.org.za)

Two **SAWISE Scholarships** for Hons level study: closing date 30 November [www.sawise.org.za](http://www.sawise.org.za) for more details.

**Congratulations** to both Profs Susan Bourne (UCT) and Karen Esler (US)! They both gave their inaugural lectures in September.



### **News from Ilda Ladeira, SAWISE – Angus scholarship winner in 2002, currently PhD student**

I recently attended the 9th annual Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing Conference held in Tuscon, US. There were 1600 attendees and over 400 speakers! Networking was strongly encouraged and the CONNECT project helped attendees look up profiles of other attendees and facilitates meetings and exchanging of contacts using barcode scanners. There were many

greats in attendance e.g., Fran Allen (the first woman to win the Turing Award for computing), Dame Wendy Hall (president of the Association for Computing Machinery and first female computer scientist to be admitted to the Royal Society) and Megan Smith (VP for New Business Development, Google). I co-presented a panel with three other PhD students whom I met during an internship at Microsoft Research India earlier this year: Divya Ramachandran (UC Berkely), Nithya Sambasivan (UC Irvine) and Julie Weber (University of Michigan). Our panel was entitled: *Women Research Women: Gateways to Technology-enabled Socio-economic Development*. Divya, spoke about using mobile applications to help health workers in rural Orissa, while Nithya talked about how information is dispersed in Bangalore slum communities, and I spoke about video training for illiterate domestic workers in Bangalore. The conference is an excellent venue for both undergraduate and postgraduate students in Computer Science to see the many possibilities for future directions for their career path (be it in research or in industry) and to make international contacts. There are MANY scholarships available for attending the conference; I was lucky enough to receive a Google scholarship. I highly recommend the conference to all female Computer Science students - apply for a scholarship, sign up as a conference volunteer or put together a submission to speak about your research!

### **News from Prof. Chinsamy-Turan, Chair of SAWISE**

I recently attended 3 conferences (and did 4 talks) in 3 different countries (Spain Germany and England) – all in just under 10 days! Exhausting, but truly exhilarating! I was a guest speaker at the Women’s luncheon at the Society of Vertebrate Palaeontology Meeting in Bristol, England that brought together women palaeontologists from around the world. I spoke about the status of WIS in South Africa and what needs to be done to improve the situation. It was fascinating to realise that many of the problems we face here in SA resonates strongly with women from different countries.

**SAWISE End of the year event-** Langebaanweg trip, Sat., 5 December. Information will shortly be mailed to you regarding this SAWISE family outing to the West Coast Fossil Park (WCFP). Geologist, Prof. Marian Tredoux will tell us all about the exciting geology en route, and at the WCFP, Pippa Haarhoff (and Anusuya) will tell us all about the 5 Million year old fossils found at this locality on the West Coast.

*Anusuya Chinsamy-Turan, Please send “news’ to include in our next SAWISE newsletter to: [anusuya.chinsamy-turan@uct.ac.za](mailto:anusuya.chinsamy-turan@uct.ac.za)*