

2005 SAASTEC Annual Conference

The 8th annual conference of SAASTEC was held from 2005 November 16 to 18, hosted by the Old Mutual-MTN Sciencentre at the Gateway Theatre of Shopping, Umhlanga, Kwazulu-Natal.

The conference was attended by about one hundred delegates and the [programme](#) comprised some forty five events and presentations.

In this photo essay we provide an overview of some of the vary varied and interesting happenings of the conference.



The conference opened with drinks and snacks at the wavehouse at Gateway, where "Surfer dude" Derek Fish entertained us with "the science of surfing".



Ginny Stone gets into the swing of things, guided by Baton Master Derek Fish, who may or may not be revealing his political allegiance.



Science and Technology Deputy Minister Derek Hanekom provided the keynote address at the official opening on Wednesday morning.



After a long but interesting day, the Natal Shark Board hosted the delegates for drinks and supper. A fusion dance group provided pleasant entertainment as the delegates relaxed.



Day two, and Mike Bruton provided a fascinating look at at great Islamic inventions. Globe trotter Ibn Battuta (alias David Muller) was on hand to talk about the replicas of these that have been built by MTE Studios for a new shopping mall in Dubai.



This general view shows the large space available at the Old Mutual-MTN ScienCentre for holding the conference.



The second day ended formal proceedings with a wonderful performance by the actor / educators of the Paleontological Scientific Trust (PAST) under the direction of Andrea Leenen, who brought the story of evolution to 150 000 learners during 2005. This was staged in the auditorium located behind the conference area in the ScienCentre.



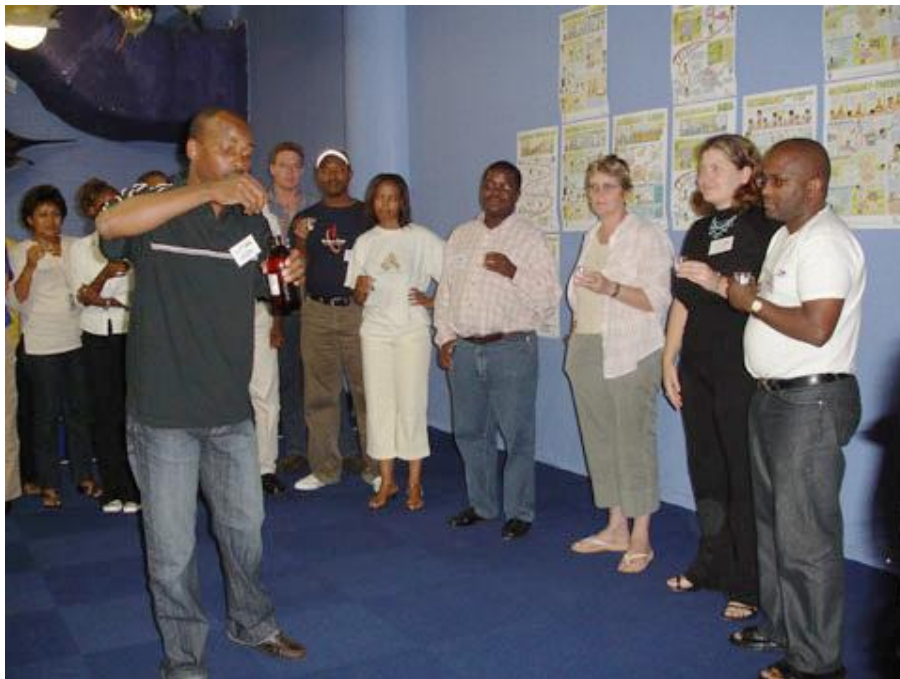
Bus ferried the delegates to Durban harbour, where a cruise around the bay complete with drinks and snacks provided more time for networking or just relaxing and enjoying the sight of the many illuminated ships. Dinner at Zacks on Wilson's Wharf completed the evening.



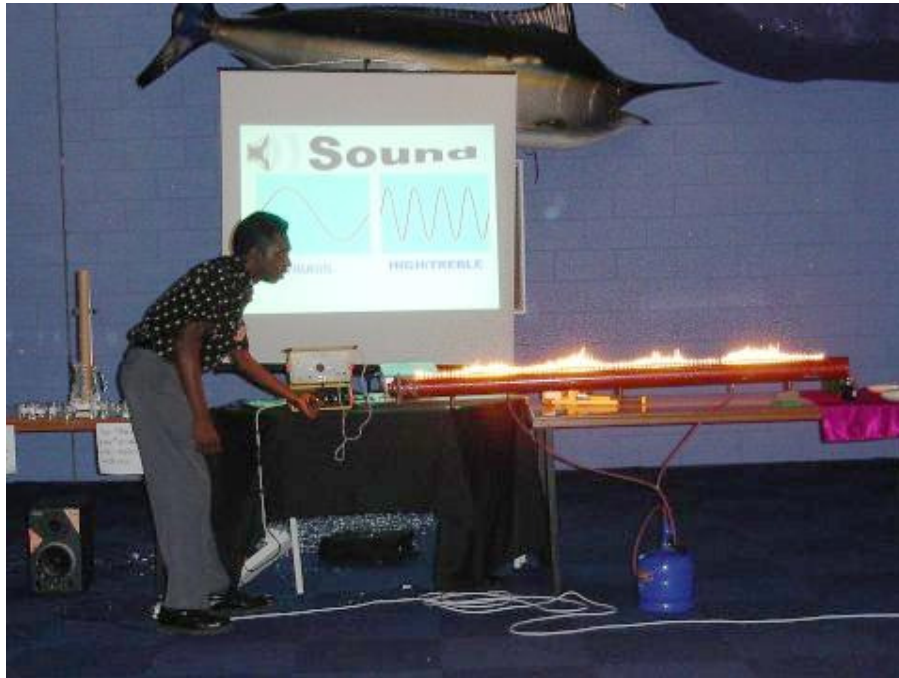
Terry and Diane Hutter are regular visitors from Kansas. For their presentation they brought some exhibits that they used during the DST sponsored African Origins Month. Here *australopithecus africanus* from Sterkfontein shares space with a sabre-toothed tiger from Kansas. Sabre teeth like this have been found at what is now the West Coast Fossil Park north of Cape Town.



Rufus Wesi's second demonstration was a wonderfully graphic illustration of communicating science through play acting. Twenty volunteers from the audience shared or did not share "bodily fluids" (in beakers) with four other volunteers. Two of the beakers of clear liquid were invisibly contaminated with a "virus" at the start of the interaction.



Rufus then tested each beaker - who had been infected by the virus? After just four interactions, eleven people were "infected", showing the ease with which HIV can spread through a population.



Kuben Mari and Haresh Nund of host Old Mutual-MTN ScienCentre showed us some great demonstrations in the auditorium. Here a gas-fed flame "oscilloscope" shows the wavelength of sound waves in the tube in a most memorable way.



Their finale was using a large hammer to break a block of cement resting on the chest of one of them, while he lay on a bed of nails. He really did get up and walk away afterwards, but do not try this at home folks! These are highly trained professionals!