1. **Bloemfontein Branch**

The Bloemfontein Branch has been active this year in organizing academic meetings that was well attended by physicians and allied professionals alike. We had a pacemaker workshop presented by myself as well as a meeting on mitral valve balloon valvuloplasty, where Prof. Stephen Brown also revealed the outcome results of the unit at Universitas Hospital. A last meeting for the year is planned for the end of October. We unfortunately did not achieve our goal of at least one meeting per quarter, but plan to do so next year.

Communication between committee and members always seems to be a problem and this was addressed by a newsletter of which the first issue was recently sent out and this will be done each quarter.

We have actively engaged in recruiting more members for the branch and has been reasonably successful in doing so. The branch is financially sound and was able to financially assist deserving research projects and academic meetings.

*Dr Nico van der Merwe, Chairperson, Bloemfontein Branch*

2. **Cape Town Branch**

i) The Cape Town branch of SAHA organized the annual SAHA Congress for 2008. The organizing committee comprised the following members: Proffs Johan Brink (Convenor and Chairperson), Patrick Commerford, Andrzej Okreglicki, and Drs Mpiko Ntsikele, Wilhelm Lichtenberg, Sandrine Lecour, Liesl Zuehlke, Andre Brooks.

The meeting was held at The Wild Coast Sun from the 2 to 5 November 2008 and was generally felt to be a resounding success.

The theme: “Wild at heart in Africa” was well-received as was the integration of plenary and parallel sessions. The attendance was remarkable with over 1200 registered local delegates including a large contingent of PASCAR members. (Previous SAHA congresses have attracted around 800 to 900 local delegates).

There was a prestigious international faculty of experts in a variety of cardiac fields. Our thanks go to Sonja du Plessis of Londoroc, who was contracted to do the bulk of the planning and logistics for the congress and delivered an outstanding service. A moderate profit was generated from the conference.

ii) The Secretarial duties, which had largely been taken over and handled by Dr Lichtenberg, our Treasurer, since the previous secretary moved from Cape Town, have more recently been taken over by Dr Liesl Zuehlke, the newly elected Secretary of the Branch.

iii) The Society has not hosted any separate academic event this year.

iv) The third annual Louis Vogelpoel Travelling Scholarship Award was awarded to Dr Liesl Zuehlke of the Division of Paediatric Cardiology at UCT and Red Cross Children’s Hospital. The Scholarship was used to attend the World Congress of Paediatric Cardiology held in Australia where she presented the initial data of her epidemiological research in Rheumatic Fever.

*Prof Johan Brink, President, Western Cape Branch*

3. **Durban / KZN Branch**

At the last annual general meeting the following were elected to the executive committee: S Vythilingum (chairman), DG Gillmer (secretary), JJ Patel (treasurer) and R Kleinloog, R Dyer, S Khan (executive committee members). The term of this committee will continue till the AGM in 2010.

The past year has been a quiet year for branch activities. With numerous international, national and industry sponsored conferences and courses, it is difficult to find appropriate times for local meetings. We have had one academic meeting addressed by Dr S Khan who discussed “Management of chronic stable angina”.

We have been concerned that registrars in Cardiology and Cardiothoracic Surgery find it difficult to attend conferences because of a lack of funds and sponsorship. Since the financial position of the KZN branch is a healthy one, the executive committee decided to sponsor two registrars annually to a national conference.

*Dr Shammugam Vythilingum, Chairperson, KZN Branch*

4. **Johannesburg Branch**

The Johannesburg branch of SA Heart had an active academic program in 2009. Office bearers were:

- Dr Eric Klug – President
- Dr David Jankelow – Treasurer
- Dr A Cilliers - Secretary
- Committee: Dr D Smith, Prof K Sliwa, Dr H Mamorare, Prof P Manga, Dr A Thornton, Dr D Ngwezi

The branch has held 3 meetings, and the AGM will be held on 14 November 2009. The first meeting held on 14th March was arranged to allow cardiology fellows to present interesting cases in a competitive format. Dr L. Mkhwazini (Johannesburg Hospital) –“Mass in the Heart”, Dr N. Lester (Johannesburg Hospital) –“Double Whammy”. Both were excellent presentations, with Dr Lester winning the event. Dr E Klug gave a talk about controversies in clinical trials “If I knew then, what I know now…” and Dr J King addressed the meeting about the need for a specialist commercial unit

A rather special, very well attended meeting was held on the 13 June. The John Barlow Memorial Symposium was excellently organised by Dr D Jankelow. Prof A Caspi (Israel) gave the Inaugural John Barlow Memorial Lecture. Dr B Friedman (USA) spoke about American Cardiology and a mixture of video and brief oral tributes were given by Dr M. Mclaren, Prof M Antunes, Dr H Copans, Dr B Tabatznik, P Landless and local speakers including Professors P. Manga and R Essop, E Gale, R Kinsley, A Lachman, and personal tributes from W Roberts, C Oakley, T O’Cheng, and J Lakier. Advocate J Browde delivered a concluding remark. It has been decided to hold an annual John Barlow memorial lecture in honour of a man who influenced cardiology in South Africa in general and Johannesburg in particular.

A third meeting’s theme, held on 12 September, was arranged around the topic of Familial Heart Disease. Dr P Brink (Cape Town) addressed the topic of HCM, Dr A Thornton covered ARVD and Dr E Klug discussed highlights of the ESC 2009 Barcelona Congress.
The Johannesburg Branch remains an active group with good finances that spent more this past year in sponsoring travel for invited speakers and accommodation as necessary. David Jankelow continues to manage our accounts well.

The meeting attendances can certainly be improved and some cardiologists never attend, with a hard core of supporters that lend their time and interest to the branch.

Novartis has been a major financial supporter of the branch with increased contributions this year to aid the costs of the John Barlow Symposium. They continue to provide an excellent framework for “sms” reminders, emailing invitations, reminders and organising registration at meetings. We are most grateful and hope they continue with their commitment.

We have taken on the responsibility of organizing the 2010 SA Heart Congress which will take place at Sun City (8-11 August). I will continue to head the organizing committee which is made up of the 2009 Johannesburg Branch Executive. The congress theme will be “Holistic Heart Care”, and this is meant to convey the general cardiological nature of the congress.

After 3 years, this will be my last as President. Many thanks to the 2009 Committee and I hope the Johannesburg Branch continues to thrive.

Dr Eric Klug, President, Johannesburg Branch

5. Pretoria Branch

The Branch activities again centered on the quarterly clinical meeting arranged by myself and the monthly Journal Club arranged by Dr Corrie van Wyk. The clinical meetings moved to a Saturday morning to allow for a more inclusive meeting though less frequent than the monthly Thursday evening meetings as in previous years. After leading this branch for more than 10 years, a new organizing structure will take over from me. Boston Scientific this year again sponsored an interventional meeting with live cases. Under the chairmanship of Dr Badenhorst who also leads in SASCI Exco.

During this year many of our colleagues from Pretoria Heart Hospital moved to Zuid Afrikaans Hospital. Their places are filled by Dr Bushidi – previously from Pretoria Academic Hospital – and Dr Makotoka – Previously from Bloemfontein. Dr Mwange qualified from Pretoria Academic Hospital and also plans to move to private practice after 10 year in the public service. Wilgers Hospital opened it’s new Cardiothoracic ICU and will get a new cath lab on 2010.

There are 40 Cardiologist and Cardiothoracic surgeons and allied professionals in the region of which two thirds are paid up members of SA Heart and of which on average 30% attend our clinical meetings.

The Pretoria Branch does not have a bank account or funds and no membership fees are payable.

Adriaan Snyders, Chairperson, Pretoria Branch

6. Tygerberg Branch

The branch arranged a successful echocardiography workshop at Zevenwacht estate in the Western Cape from the 24th to the 27th of June 2009 (SUNEecho). An initiative was launched, in collaboration with the Division of Cardiology, Stellenbosch University, to sponsor the accommodation, meals and local transport of ten cardiology trainees attending the annual Cardiology at the Limits meeting to be held in Cape Town. No progress was made this year with initiatives to amalgamate the Western Cape branches.

Anton Doubell, Chairperson, Tygerberg Branch