

IN MEMORIAM: SERGEI PODLIPAEV (1947–2004)



Our beloved friend, Sergei Anatolyevich Podlipaev, passed away in St. Petersburg, Russia, on February 24, 2004 from a brain aneurism. He had just returned from Burkina Faso, where he was trying to find non-trypanosomatid flagellates in tse-tse flies, and where he had discovered Africa for himself, fulfilling one of his many dreams.

Sergei Podlipaev was born in post-war Leningrad. After graduation from Leningrad University in 1971, he spent 5 years in the Marine Biological Research Institute on the Barents Sea close to the Northern port of Murmansk. This austere region, with short but intense summers, remained his favorite place till the end of his days. He received his PhD in 1977 from the Moscow State University and returned to his beautiful hometown, where he worked at the Leningrad State University and later at the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Sergei was a field zoologist with his soul and heart. With his mentor, Professor Shulman, Sergei was studying myxozoans, but with his per-

manent curiosity inevitably became involved in many different projects. He participated in dozens of expeditions throughout Russia and the former Soviet republics. On a few occasions he would join these in order to avoid sessions of the institute, at which he might be asked to become a member of the Communist party. During these months-long trips, often to uninhabited and unforgiving areas, he became perfectly familiar with the mammals, plants, and especially insects, but also learned a lot about the culture, habits and religion of local people. He became an outstanding expert on Soviet Central Asia, and listening to his stories was unforgettable.

Since the '80s, the largely-ignored trypanosomatids of insects became his obsession. He started as a traditional taxonomist and later became interested in molecular systematics becoming one of the leaders in his field. His friendly and open personality and a contagious enthusiasm helped him to forge efficient collaborations first in Russia and later abroad. He certainly suffered from the isolation imposed on scientists in the Soviet Union, and immediately after the iron curtain was lifted in 1990 went abroad for the first time. He worked for several months in Brazil, USA, Germany, and repeatedly in France and the Czech Republic. In the last two countries, perhaps his favorites, he won many friends and perfected his skills in molecular biology. Sergei co-authored about 80 research papers (one of the last ones in this issue), wrote one book, was member of several scientific societies, and since 2001 headed the Group of Molecular Systematics of the Zoological Institute in St. Petersburg. This was a challenging appointment—from his main office he enjoyed a beautiful view of the Neva embankment with the splendid Hermitage palace. Sometimes the temperature inside the laboratory dropped below zero due to the lack of funds for heating and he would have to protect his computer with blankets. But Sergei was never desperate, just the opposite. Regardless of whether it was in St. Petersburg, České Budějovice, or Montpellier, after having his traditional morning cigarette, Sergei would appear in the lab with his smile and a permanently good mood. After doing his share of pipetting during the day, he would deeply enjoy the Bernard beer or a local French wine with friends in the evening, often entertaining the whole table. Sergei's favorite hobby on the weekend was a cross-country walk, during which he could easily cover a 30 km distance in one afternoon.

His untimely demise was a shock to his friends and colleagues. It is the more painful, since Sergei was full of so many plans and ideas. We, who have been fortunate to know Sergei, will never forget his humanism, his deep sense of humor and friendship, and his joy of living.

Sergei is survived by his wife Julia and daughter Kira.—JULIUS LUKEŠ, *Institute of Parasitology, České Budějovice, Czech Republic*; MICHEL DOLLET, *CIRAD, Montpellier, France*; DMITRI MASLOV and DAVID CAMPBELL, *University of California, Riverside and Los Angeles, USA*.