

# ROSA Annual Report | 2019



## Chairman's Report

2019 has been an incredible year of growth for ROSA, not just in membership numbers, but in the maturation of many of our initiatives. The annual conference, Cape Retreat, Imbali and Strelitzia contests have all now been running for long enough that we have worked out many of the 'kinks' to deliver quality benefits for our members.

Each year, though, we face new challenges, and as this organisation grows, those challenges become more complex. I am exceptionally grateful to the volunteers on the 2018-19 management committee who have deliberated on and discussed every issue, ensuring that the decisions we made were carefully weighed and viewed from multiple viewpoints.

During this past year, we introduced a few new initiatives, the most notable being our first, experimental anthology which has been such an incredible success that we are looking at expanding this into three anthologies in the coming year. This first anthology would not have been possible without the tireless (and unpaid) contributions by Ashleigh Giannoccaro (formatting and marketing), Suzanne Jefferies and myself (editing), and the lovely cover created for us (again unpaid!) by Gareth Paul. We would also like to thank Lapa Uitgewers for their tremendous support.

But as we reach the end of another financial year, I find myself looking forward rather than back. More of our members are published than ever before, many of our authors are making significant progress in their careers, and we've had a lot of new members join ROSA this year, bringing with them a wealth of experience, initiative and fresh energy. I am so excited to see where ROSA goes from here!

Thank you to all the volunteers who contributed to ROSA's success this past year, including the chapter leaders, committee members, mentors, judges and newsletter contributors (and anyone else I may have forgotten!). And thank you too to everyone who has volunteered to get involved in the coming year.

*Romy Sommer*

ROSA Chairperson

## **Treasurer's Report**

The increase in membership fees for the current financial year has been marginal. The amount of the fees has not changed over the past number of years so movement in this item is dependent on the increase in our membership.

With regard to conferences and retreats both the 2018 Conference and the 2018 Cape Retreat returned a profit. These activities are the main thrust of our organisation and have the greatest impact on our revenue and expenditure. The 2019 conference is still a work in progress at this time but should make a profit too.

The reserves of the association total R 21.8k. This is made up of the bank account balance of R 88.8k, a significant increase over the R16.8 k last year. The PayPal account balance is R5,0k. The expenses of the association are well contained.

The Revenue authorities are looking with a sceptical eye on all Non Profit Organisations, as these institutions are being used to launder money and make tax free payments to individuals. I'm happy to report that should they come knocking on our door we have nothing to hide. The finances of this organisation have been handled with the utmost integrity.

The 2018-19 Financial Statements are attached to this report, and will shortly be available on the ROSA website.

*Peter Barker*

ROSA Treasurer

## Membership

We closed the 2018–19 year with 91 members, up from 61 members at the end of our previous financial year – an increase of 33%. 84 members have renewed to date for the 2019–20 year.

In July 2019 we moved to a new, online registration and renewal system using Google Forms which made the registration process more accessible and as a result we saw an upsurge in new members numbers in July. We also recently decided to make the existing Facebook group a Members Only group, which resulted in several long-time ‘lurkers’ joining as members.

Our membership currently consists of 32% unpublished members and 68% published members (including traditional, self and hybrid).

As at the end of the 2019 financial year, our members were spread across 6 provinces, with just over the half coming from Gauteng. The breakdown per province is listed below. We also have 6 members who live outside of South Africa (two in Canada, 1 each in Mauritius, New Zealand, Qatar and Namibia).

- Gauteng – 51 members
- Western Cape – 22 members
- Kwazulu-Natal – 5 members
- Mpumalanga – 4 members
- Limpopo – 2 member
- North West – 1 member
- International – 6 members

Only those with paid up memberships were included in these figures.

We welcome all our new (and old!) members and hope you enjoy a long and satisfying journey with us.

## **Vision Statement**

ROSA's stated mission, as per our constitution and our website, is:

- To provide support, encouragement and professional development to romance writers, especially to writers resident in Southern Africa and of South African descent.
- To enhance and promote the various types of romantic fiction and to encourage good writing.
- To support writers of romantic fiction through networking, information, resources and an online community.
- Represent the genre of romantic fiction within Southern Africa.

During our 2018-19 year we furthered these aims through the following initiatives:

## **Local Chapters**

ROSA currently has four chapters, based in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban. A new Garden Route chapter has recently been started in the 2019-20 financial year. Chapter reports are attached as Addendums to this Annual Report.

## **Website, Blog, Newsletters & Social Media**

The [www.romancewriters.co.za](http://www.romancewriters.co.za) domain is maintained via The Framework, and the website is hosted by Wix. Earlier this year we upgraded to a premium package with Wix to enable us to lose the Wix advertising banner.

The blog has remained largely inactive this past year, but thanks to recent volunteers, we hope that this will soon start seeing a new lease on life.

Our newsletter mailing lists remain hosted by Mailchimp on their free package, but due to recent changes to Mailchimp's offerings and terms of service we have begun to experiment with using Wix as a newsletter service provider. The ROSA quarterly newsletter is distributed via email to paid up members four times a year. The newsletter has grown in size over this past year, and we thank everyone who has contributed content.

The ROSA Twitter account was managed this past year by Cliffordene Norton, previously of Lapa Uitgewers, and Romy Sommer, and has remained steady.

Facebook has been by far our most active method of communication and engagement both with members and with the wider writing community. Thank you to Marianne Lomborg who started a Page for us in addition to the existing Group.

## **Professional Development**

ROSA successfully achieved its aim of providing professional development for its members during the past year through ROSACon 2018, the Cape Retreat in 2019, the Strelitzia mentorship program, and workshops offered by the local chapters. It has also been encouraging to see many of our members reach out to one another independent of the organisation to exchange knowledge and information.

## **Quality Control & the Pursuit of Excellence**

During 2019, ROSA again ran the Imbali Contest for Excellence in Romance Writing for published books in both English and Afrikaans. These awards were judged by a panel of independent, external reviewers and book bloggers. In 2019, we received 8 Afrikaans entries and 14 English entries.

The Strelitzia award for unpublished members once again included a mentorship phase. The judges have noted that the quality of submissions has improved year on year. Eight entrants were coached by published mentors through the first round, and in May the finalists who made it through to the second round were announced as Megan Chronis, Marianne Lomborg and Kristien Wolmarans.

Winners of both the 2019 Imbali and Strelitzia awards will be announced at the ROSA gala dinner and awards ceremony in Johannesburg on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

## Outreach

Unfortunately, during this past year we were not yet able to initiate the planned outreach to readers and writers in previously disadvantaged communities through local libraries, but we have now received some interest from volunteers and look forward to getting this project off the ground in 2020. We are also committed to looking at new ways to reach out to readers, such as the book launch for the Wedding Season anthology being held at Skoobs in Montecasino on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September. We welcome any member initiatives to connect with readers and other writers.

## Looking Forward

Each year we learn and grow, adapting our processes and projects to improve the value to our members. However all our initiatives require volunteer participation, so we encourage all our members to get involved to ensure that ROSA remains a dynamic and progressive organisation. At the upcoming Annual General Meeting on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 we will discuss possible changes and improvements to some of our events and programs as well as some new initiatives, but we welcome suggestions and assistance from our members at any time throughout the year. Over the past 6 years since the organisation's foundation, ROSA has made incredible progress, and I am excited to see what lies ahead for us.

Thank you for your time and your support.

*Romy Sommer*

ROSA Chairperson

## **Chapter Report – Johannesburg**

The ROSA Johannesburg chapter has seen a growth in the number of members attending events this past year. We have included some themed events, starting the year with a vision board workshop (as per the example set by the Cape Town chapter) and continuing with specialists coming to chat to us from the medical and security industries. We are looking to having more of these Q&A sessions to help our writers get their facts straight! There have been a couple of Write-In events which have also started gaining popularity to help members get back into their writing routines. The WhatsApp group has also become an active area where writers are connecting on a regular basis, sharing their insight, news and jokes.

*Mandy Verbaan*

Johannesburg Chapter Coordinator

## **Chapter Report – Western Cape**

I'm excited to report that since last year we've increased our events from the retreat and three writing days for the year to a mix of the annual retreat, writing days and regular workshops. I've had a wonderful response to the monthly workshops and attendance for all events is good. Workshop attendance is usually around 15 ladies and the writing days around 12. The ladies appear to enjoy not only learning about the craft and the business side of writing, but also interacting with each other.

Quite a few new faces have joined our events and, from what I can make out a few of them have formally signed up as members of ROSA. We have two more workshops and our annual Christmas event still left this year. I am already contemplating what topics to cover in our workshops for 2020 and how to continue growing the chapter's attendance and membership. I am so proud of what our ladies are achieving. So far this year our chapter has had 30 releases between us and a number of awards have been received. A really amazing group of women I am blessed to call friends.

*Dorothy Ewels*

Western Cape Chapter Coordinator



## **Chapter Report - Pretoria**

The Pretoria chapter held workshops on characterization, conflict and self-publishing at the Waverley Library during the past year. Our chapter holds meetings there to support the library, so they can show that they have community projects going which helps them justify their continued existence in a time when libraries are suffering. We also had several casual meetings, a picnic in the park and a meeting where we talked about deep point of view. We gained several new members this year.

*Marie Dry*

Pretoria Chapter Coordinator

## **Chapter Report - Durban**

The Durban ROSA chapter unfortunately hasn't been happening this year. I've been struggling to find the time to organise meetings and members also seem to struggle to get to the meetings. I would love to hand over the running of the chapter to someone who has the time and drive to get the group together on a regular basis. I have the enthusiasm and the ideas, but lack time! We have an amazing group of writers scattered all over Durban. It would be lovely if we could get together to have a writing workshop or just meet at a venue to write together and chat about writing. I haven't given up totally though. I am still brainstorming a way to get this going. Pravina has also offered to assist me should I organise anything. Ideas are most welcome!

*Kathy Bosman*

Durban Chapter Coordinator

**Romance Writers Organisation of South Africa (ROSA)**

Income and Expenditure statement for the year ending June 30, 2019

	<b>ZAR 2019</b>	<b>ZAR 2018</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>	130 924,69	96 605,61
Membership dues	14 486,84	21 549,06
Cape Retreat 2019 Fees	26 780,00	21 097,50
2017 Conference Fees	-	37 175,00
2018 Conference Fees	60 190,00	7 985,00
2019 Conference Fees	21 175,00	
Awards Entrance Fees	8 500,00	7 850,00
Johannesburg Chapter	-	800,00
Revaluation of Foreign account	(207,15)	149,05
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	58 784,25	125 499,21
Annual General Meeting	1 870,00	1 087,36
Bank Charges	1 217,69	1 806,28
Cape Retreat 2019 Costs	26 241,66	19 865,60
2017 Conference Costs		58 294,66
2018 Conference Costs	26 314,33	35 062,45
Publicity	-	1 038,80
Website and other general in-house costs	1 994,26	818,25
Strelitzia & Imbali Expenses 2018	361,31	7 392,25
Strelitzia & Imbali Expenses 2019	785,00	
Johannesburg Chapter Costs	-	133,56
ACCUMULATED RESERVES - for the year	72 140,44	(28 893,60)
ACCUMULATED RESERVES - opening year	21 814,03	50 707,63
ACCUMULATED RESERVES - end of year	<u>93 954,46</u>	<u>21 814,03</u>

**Romance Writers Organisation of South Africa (ROSA)**

Assets and Liabilities Statement at June 30, 2018

Accumulated Reserves	<u>93 954,46</u>	<u>21 814,03</u>
Represented by		
Cash FNB Account	88 856,45	16 842,69
Paypal Account	5 098,02	4 971,34
NET ASSETS	<u>93 954,47</u>	<u>21 814,03</u>

Notes

The accounts are set up on the cash based system, whereby revenue and expenditure relevant to the organisation is not reflected in the accounts until it has been entered in the bank account

Correspondingly the conference revenue and expenditure is work in progress as transactions relating to them span consecutive financial years.

The balance on the Paypal account is USD 362,24. This has been converted to ZAR at the rate on June 30, 2019