

ROSA 2019 AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Date: 20 September, 2019

Time: 4pm to 6pm

Venue: Quatermain Hotel, Sandton, Johannesburg (with a web link for remote members)

Matters discussed

1. Roll call and confirmation of the quorum

A quorum of paid-up members with voting rights was achieved through a combination of in-person attendees and proxy votes. A physical register was signed as confirmation and is kept on record with ExCo.

3 Members joined the meeting online via Uber Conference's free version. Despite a few technical glitches, this worked well.

2. Reading of the ROSA Vision Statement

The vision statement was read by the chair.

3. Annual reports: chairperson, treasurer and chapters

All annual reports were emailed out to members in advance of the meeting and were available in printed format during the meeting. Accepted as tabled.

4. Approval of the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct was shared with members for comment and is available on the ROSA website. Comments were received before the AGM and taken into consideration. The Code of Conduct as currently available on the ROSA website was accepted.

5. Report back on ROSA's first anthology, Wedding Season

The first royalty statement has been received from LAPA, with encouraging sales figures. Online sales are also encouraging.

The contributing authors consider the anthology a success, with good feedback received on all contributions even though they had a wide range of styles.

LAPA have expressed interest in publishing more ROSA anthologies in future, in Afrikaans and English, though this is dependent on sales continuing to be strong.

➔ **Action for all ROSA members: Please share and promote the Anthology to your friends and fan base.**

6. Review of the move to online forms

There has been a 20% increase in membership since the move to online forms in July, though it's not certain whether that was due to the move to online registration or people waiting for the new year to start.

One or two people commented that it was difficult to access the forms on the Google drive, but there was an overwhelming positive reaction from members present and online.

✓ **Decision: move to using all forms online from now on.**

7. 2019 Imbali Contest feedback

In 2019 there was a new committee, and new entry policies were enforced.

Entry fees remained unchanged, however (R350)

8 Afrikaans and 14 English entries were received (similar numbers to before)

A category for longer entries was allowed in 2019, however the number of these was limited so that judges were not over-burdened.

Online registration and online judging were used for the first time, with universally good feedback.

A DNF (Did Not Finish) option will be added to future score sheets, however there will be very strict criteria regulating the use of this function.

Changes made in 2019 that will be maintained:

- Books by co-authors to be allowed
- Authors are allowed to submit both a solo book and a co-authored book
- Authors writing in both Afrikaans and English are allowed to submit one (different) book in each language concurrently.

- ✓ **Decision: in 2019, all entrants had to be ROSA members, but in 2020 the contest will also be open to non-members, though at a higher price. Suggested pricing for 2020 (to be confirmed by the 2020 Imbali Committee): R350 for members, R700 for non-members.**

8. 2019 Strelitzia Contest feedback

One of the applicants selected for mentoring turned out to have been previously published and had taken his books down only for the purpose of entering the contest. Entry requirements will be tightened to prevent similar fraud in future.

However, finding enough published authors willing and available to mentor is proving more and more difficult, so the following changes are proposed for 2020 (to be confirmed by the 2020 Strelitzia committee):

- Rather than limiting the entrants to the number of mentors available (5 at the moment), mentorship will happen through a series of webinars, presented by each of the mentors.
- Mentors will be paid a small amount for their time (volunteered up to this point)
- Webinars will be open to all ROSA members for a fee, but will be included in the Strelitzia entrance fee
- A word limit will be placed on the first three chapters (for round one judging) as well as on the entire submission
- A suggestion was made to supply a guide on how to write romance to entrants (whether a ROSA-specific publication or existing book TBD)
- The entry fee will increase, with the same suggested pricing as for the Imbalis

9. Report back on ROSACon 2019

A bigger venue was chosen this year since the breakout room was at capacity last year. Attendance fees have not increased, yet despite increased costs from the venue and international speaker, the conference broke even.

There was only a small increase in overall attendance over the previous year, in part due to the dates clashing with ComicCon and RARE, and in part due to the downturn in the economy.

18 first-time attendees registered.

An offer was made to use the GIBS campus (used for last year's AGM) next year to save costs. This will be considered.

10. Membership fees and renewals

- ✓ **Decision: Membership fees to increase to R300 a year (if paid at once) or R340 a year if paid in two instalments. Pro-rated membership will remain, but members joining from the second half of the ROSA year will not be able to pay in more than one instalment.**
- ✓ **Decision: International membership will remain at \$15 a year for 2020/21.**

Associate (non-voting) membership exists at R500 a year for non-writing service providers, such as publishing companies. The PR committee will be tasked with promoting this option and setting up an associate members' page on the ROSA website.

11. Review of the constitution and vision statement

The Constitution will be reviewed and updated by a subcommittee in 2020.

The Vision Statement will be re-looked to ensure it is in line with the purpose and vision discussed in this AGM. It was agreed that ROSA is a professional association rather than a charity, and that the organisation's focus should be more on giving benefit to published members and to representing the genre than on teaching. ROSA's activities should be realigned to this vision.

12. Creation of procedures, roles and responsibilities

- ➔ **Action: all committees / roles in 2020 are to create bullet-point lists of the procedures they follow when carrying out any official ROSA task, in order to allow an easier hand-over of tasks to other members in future.**

13. Review of chapters

ExCo wishes to thank all active chapters for their work.

A new Garden Route chapter is being introduced.

There have been requests for new chapters, including an international chapter (either virtual or run from London).

ExCo requests chapters to keep the costs of (some or all of) their events low to remain inclusive and accessible to all, for example by using libraries as venues as the Pretoria chapter does.

A suggestion was made to replace entry fees for "free" events with a request for a book donation, which can go to charities such as Read to Rise or the Siyafunda foundation.

Kim Hunter volunteered to make recordings of physical Johannesburg chapter meetings to share with remote or international members.

14. ROSACon2020 / Readers' book fair

Romy Sommer announced her resignation from the conference committee in 2020, however requests were made for a conference to still be held.

Due to the significant amount of time and effort required to arrange a conference, it was suggested that a subcommittee be created to look at alternative conference options for 2020, with committee members responsible for specific tasks.

Possibilities suggested include:

- Continue with a ROSACon2020 conference, but to be run by a committee of new volunteers.
- Even though the Cape Town chapter has expressed a preference for continuing with smaller, more intimate Retreats rather than hosting the conference, a request was made that they be given the opportunity to re-consider.
- A smaller event be held in place of the current conference, perhaps a one-day 'conference' followed by a day of writing in Johannesburg, to echo the Cape Town Retreat.
- A book fair aimed at connecting authors with their readers, rather than a conference for authors only.

It was agreed that any ROSACon-type event should not clash with ComicCon 2020 to allow better attendance, and to enable ROSA to have a stand at ComicCon.

15. Scholarship program

Traditionally, membership fees have been used to sponsor two scholarship places to ROSACon, which effectively limited the beneficiaries to Johannesburg residents.

50% of the profits from the first anthology will be donated to the Read to Rise literacy charity and the other 50% will be contributed to the scholarship fund.

- ✓ **Decision: In line with the decision that ROSA is a professional association rather than a charity, the profits from future anthologies will be shared between the contributing authors, once costs are covered, and the scholarships will again be funded by membership fees.**
- ✓ **Decision: in 2020, the scholarships will be allocated a monetary value instead of being limited to conference attendance. Beneficiaries can use the scholarship funds to enter the Strelitzias, attend ROSA webinars, or contribute to event fees etc as suits their requirements and location.**

Suggestion: to ask the Siyafunda foundation and similar charities already supported by ROSA and its members to put forward scholarship applicants in future.

16. Election of the 2019-2020 Committee

Online voting using Election Runner was a success, with 65% voter turnout.

The only issues experienced were with last-minute paying members who were added to the voter roll after voting began. In future, voting rights will terminate if membership is paid or renewed after voting opens.

Members of the 2019 / 2020 ExCo are:

- Romy Sommer (Johannesburg Chapter)
- Mandy Verbaan (Johannesburg Chapter)
- Peter Barker (Johannesburg Chapter)
- Ashleigh Giannoccaro (Johannesburg Chapter)
- Dorothy Ewels (Western Cape Chapter)
- Tanya Wilde (Garden Route Chapter)
- Pravina Maharaj (Durban Chapter)
- Marie Dry (Pretoria Chapter)

Roles within the committee will be decided by the new committee members.

17. Any Other Business

- ✓ ExCo wishes to thank all outgoing members of the 2018 / 19 committees.
- ✓ ExCo wishes to thank all members who volunteered for the 2019 / 2020 term on the new registration forms. The new ExCo will email volunteers in the coming weeks to assign tasks.
- ✓ ROSA will look into having a stand at ComicCon 2020 as well as the ATKV Skryfskool, in order to connect with new members and readers.