

## **ROSA MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 5 SEPTEMBER 2015**

All present signed the register. There were 9 members present, plus one proxy vote and one attendee via Skype, enabling a quorum.

The Mission Statement was distributed and read out.

Romy Sommer read out the Chairperson's Report which included the accomplishments of ROSA in its first year.

### **1) Financial report**

- Very little expenditure except on conference
- R3k profit 2014 goes towards admin fees, bank fees etc
- It was suggested that ROSA investigates ways to increase funds in order to attract well known guest speakers or run workshops
- One suggestion was if ROSA members were invited to speak on behalf of ROSA, they could be 'hired out' at a fee which would revert to ROSA. A page could be added to the website offering this service.

### **2) Membership fees and renewals**

- The first year's membership runs from 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016.
- Anyone who joined before July 2015 got a couple of months' bonus.
- A discussion was held regarding what fees should be charged to those joining later in the Financial Year (FY). It was suggested that (a) a pro rata fee of R100 be charged irrespective of how late they joined, or (b) reduced rates be charged for each quarter of the FY.
- Membership fees are currently at R200 pa. It was agreed that the membership fee be increased to R250 from 1 July 2016.
- People who struggle to raise the full membership have the option to pay the fee in monthly installments, though this should be kept to a minimum as it is difficult to manage.

### **3) Conference review**

- The 2014 ROSA Conference had 30 delegates, with ROSA members as speakers and only a couple of outside speakers. No media coverage.
- The 2015 ROSA Conference has more outside speakers, however, only 18 paid up delegates were recorded at the time of the AGM, despite there being increased media coverage (radio, TV, newspapers).

- There was skewed interest in some of the speakers therefore some talks would be moved.
- Due to its positioning, the 2015 Conference is more slanted towards the literary world and heavier on Afrikaans.
- A Conference Committee for the 2016 Conference was elected. These members are Suzanne, Clare, Annemarie and Romy. Romy would determine each role at a later date, although the 2016 Contest administration is to be handled by Annemarie.
- Mary Jo Putney has been secured as the Keynote speaker for 2016. This will be revealed at the close of the 2015 conference.
- The 2016 ROSA Conference will be held in Johannesburg, as that is where ROSA's greatest support base is. (Of the 18 delegates currently signed up for the 2015 Conference in the Cape, 12 are from Gauteng).
- The agreed dates for 2016 are Sat 24th & Sun 25th of September. A venue will need to be selected from amongst the quotes received. Site visits would need to be done. Marie suggested that perhaps a Pretoria venue might be less expensive. **Action: Romy, Suzanne, Clare, Annemarie**
- Clare to put together a post 2015 Conference survey to the ROSA members, particularly in terms of pitch feedback. Also ask for feedback from those who did pitches at the conferences. **Action: Clare**

#### 4) Contests & Awards

- In keeping with ROSA's mission statement, it was decided that ROSA needed to introduce an award/contest that acknowledged excellence. To this end, it was agreed to establish a contest committee to help find judges, decide how to run it the competition, determine the rules, eligibility (SA only?) etc. Rebecca and Clare were elected to the Contest Committee.
- Similarly, a lot of writing groups have regular short story competitions where winners are published, for example Flash Fiction contests, and it was suggested that ROSA run something similar. Winners perhaps receive a marketing course or publication on web? Lizette offered to help set this up, thereafter to be taken over by the committee. **Action: Lizette**
- Other suggestions were the introduction of a South African equivalent to the RITA awards, with separate panels for Afrikaans and English novels, etc. Perhaps use local book bloggers as judges.
- Sugar & Snark blog is judging the writing contest for this year's conference.
- It was also suggested to launch a ROSA Writing competition 6 months after the conference. This competition could perhaps be launched at a Gala dinner/Christmas lunch in Johannesburg. **Action: Rebecca, Clare**

- Marie has a contact who can help with the design of a trophy/award.

**Action: Marie**

## 5) ROSA Chapters

- The leaders of the various ROSA chapters are as follows: CPT - Angele / PTA - Marie / JHB - yet to be elected.
- It was decided that Chapter leaders must be paid up members to ensure they properly represent ROSA's vision and mission.
- Furthermore, it was decided that protocol needed to be introduced (perhaps from 2016) to provide the structure for these chapters (meetings, reporting, conflict resolution etc).
- It was noted that it was a struggle to get more than 5/6 people to attend Chapter meetings, even though the JHB chapter has 45 people on the mailing list.
- Some suggestions on how to attract more members to attend monthly meetings included:
  - Guest speakers
  - Writers2000 have a set date and time - same every month same venue, always a guest speaker, and the interest in competitions. JHB Chapter to try this Oct & Nov 2015
  - SciFi & Fantasy author Fred Strydom has agreed to be a guest speaker
  - Blairgowrie - Retro Shed rents out space to people who work from home
    - Romy to investigate costs

## 6) Promotions and sponsorships

- It was discussed whether ROSA could approach sponsors, and what ROSA was prepared to do in terms of sponsorship. Any decisions need to be in keeping with the values of ROSA. Rebecca to draft the protocol. **Action: Rebecca**

## 7) Volunteers Needed

- **Treasurer:** Peter volunteered as ROSA Treasurer.
- **Jo'burg Chapter Leader:** Tasks would include setting up events, organizing venues, mailing out notices of meetings via MailChimp and inviting speakers. **Volunteer still needed.**
- **Social Media:** It was agreed that ROSA needed to be more active in terms of social media. FB has been fairly active, as has Twitter. Lizette was thanked for her help with Twitter. Biba volunteered to be custodian of the FB page, and to maintain the ROSA blog. **Action: Biba**

- It was decided that there needed to be a committee to decide on the sort of messages ROSA sends out via social media as well as how to spread the work load.
- **Membership Liaison:** The membership file has been set up by Romy. Clare volunteered to take over as membership liaison. **Action: Clare**
- **Media Liaison:** ELLE magazine recently approached ROSA for writer interviews. It was suggested that a link be placed on the website for media contacts. Suzanne volunteered to take the role of media liaison. **Action: Suzanne**

## 8) Future roles required

- Chapter liaison - to manage all chapter leaders
- Mentorship program - to be included as a 2016 topic
- Bookshop liaison - eg Readers Warehouse at Lifestyle Garden Centre
- Libraries & schools outreach - anything to generate excitement about reading
- Online workshops / webinars - Mandy
- Editor pitches draw people. Could we charge for this - at least to cover costs?
- Book reviews - charge people for this?

## 9) Focus for 2016

- Membership drive committee - Clare & Rebecca
- Increased social media engagement
- Surveys
- Guest speakers / Workshops
- Improve local chapter attendance
- Promote member books, also via newsletter
- ROSA top 10 books
- Diversity - investigate how to attract members of other races and languages

## 10) Election of Executive Committee

The new Executive Committee was elected. Its members are Clare, Rebecca, Peter, Mandy, Suzanne & Romy, with Romy re-elected as Chairperson.

## 11) Open Floor

- Marie suggested ROSA's published authors might be interested in first 3 chapter book audio creation - iTunes with link to buy. She has a contact for this.
- Mandela Day community outreach. Talk about writing - perhaps in a library (Alexandra library?) - 1 or 2 hours - 6 x 15 min sessions to talk to potential writers one on one.

**THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED**