PSSA Conference

The conference has come and gone. As always, the office staff heaved a sigh of heartfelt relief!

This year was fairly low key. Finances are always an issue, and we need to tailor our conferences with the cost in mind. This year, the result was that generally, we used speakers who were coming to the conference as delegates, with some notable exceptions, such as Dr Anban Pillay, Prof Ros Dowse, Dr Mano Chetty and Prof Marc Blockman. Read next month’s SAPJ to see what they had to say!

It was good to interact with the delegates, but we are very aware of the fact that many of the topics presented at conference should be distributed to members who are unable to attend it. At the moment, there are only two ways in which this can happen. You can either read about some of it in the SAPJ, or your branch or sector members of the National Executive Committee should ensure that you are fully informed.

We know that this is not always easy, and I suspect that some members feel rather isolated from national happenings. Perhaps now is the right time to reconsider what members need out of the conference, and how we ensure that they are up to date with current pharmaceutical trends.

What are your needs and suggestions?

New presidential committees

In the meantime, if you’re anything like myself, you’ll want to know who has been entrusted with the leadership of our Society. I’m sure you’ll join us in congratulating them, and reminding them of their responsibilities.

PSSA presidential committee

President: Johann Kruger
Deputy President: Sarel Malan
Treasurer: Michéle Coleman
Vice President, Academy: Shirley-Anne Boschmans
Vice President, CPS: Kobus le Roux
Vice President, SAAHIP: Stéphan Möller
Vice President, SAAPI: Tammy Chetty
Past President: Sybil Seoka

CPS presidential committee

President: Kobus le Roux
Deputy President: Christine Venter
Honorary Treasurer: Danie Brink
Honorary Secretary: Pep Manolas
Past President: Wim Grobbelaar

Skeletons in the cupboard

Yes, more of my skeletons are about to emerge! But I have to tell you that before writing this, I tried to find out whether or not it’s correct to speak about a “closet” or a “cupboard”. I enjoyed some of the answers to this question that I found on the ubiquitous Google.

George Bernard Shaw, who was Irish, and therefore I’ll forgive him for using American, and not English in this instance, is quoted as saying: “If you can’t get rid of the skeleton in your closet, you’d best take it out and teach it to dance”. What a brilliant idea! And if you’re not a skeleton yet, you should think about learning to dance too!

My favourites, which influenced my choice of the chosen word, were:

“In British English, I don’t call that thing a closet, I call it a cupboard, and that’s where all my skeletons are. If I ever go to live in the USA, the poor things will have to get used to being in a ‘closet’.”

“I generally avoid the word ‘closet’ because when I hear it, it’s usually used in phrases like ‘come out of the closet’, ‘a closet paedophile’ and a ‘closet wife beater’. My skeletons wouldn’t be happy in that company”.

So I’m sticking to “cupboard”, which was my original choice anyway.

Paid to do a job

When my daughters were young, I lectured at Wits Technikon. During the school holidays, I sometimes took them to work with me. (The take-a-child-to-work thing only worked with one of my daughters, who is happily working in a pharmacy in England.)

Of course, they got bored. Equally obvious was that they followed me from the office to classroom and back. In that short journey, I was frequently stopped by students with questions. Naturally, I answered them and we discussed whatever it was that they asked.

How did my daughters react? They asked me: “Do they really pay you to talk?” This was very insightful, considering that they were 13 and nine at the time.

So what’s new? I only realised it at the conference. I spoke about the use, misuse and abuse of social media in the workplace, an interesting topic. Of course, we had to speak about the PSSA facebook page, and that of the Young Pharmacists’ Group. If you’re not a member, why not? And if you are a member, isn’t it time you initiated a discussion on one of them?

But I digress. While I was talking, I realised that I am in a strange position. Because I monitor social media, such as facebook, for issues that should be addressed by the PSSA, and this is part of my job, my daughters could well ask me now: “Do they really pay you to go on facebook?”

It sounds as though I’ve had dream jobs! And I have!

Lorraine Osman