Making your voice heard

As I write this, the South African local election fever is drawing to a close, while the United States’ fever rises. Not so long ago, we were also drawn into the Brexit discussions.

It’s all about choice, rights and responsibilities. It may be exciting and exhilarating, and a chance for new beginnings, but it’s quite a burden, isn’t it? Do we get the government we deserve? Do we get the government we need? After it’s over, we generally forget all about it until election day rolls around again. Unless we’re whinging about something that’s been done. Or not.

Bringing it home

The same thing applies to PSSA elections. Do you get actively involved? Do you make sure that your branch elections are well supported? Or is it same old, same old? Why? Are you satisfied with your committee? And if not, why didn’t you do something about it? At least you have more hope of success at a branch level than you do in other elections.

Acknowledgement for our leaders

Being a leader is really a lonely place. Someone is going to be dissatisfied with your decisions. That’s a given. Someone is going to criticise everything about you, from the colour of your eyes to the way you express yourself. You have to just hang in there and do your best. I’d like to acknowledge the PSSA leaders right now. Our presidential committee is asked to contribute to the SAPJ. Sometimes, we expect them to write every month. It isn’t easy to write. Sometimes it isn’t easy to share your thoughts. Sometimes it isn’t easy to find the right words. It’s even difficult to decide on a topic.

My job revolves around words. It’s my comfort zone, but sometimes I find it almost impossible to write. I cannot imagine what you want to hear, and if I can, I’m frequently unable to find the words I need. So I really empathise with people who are forced, usually against their will, to write something that will be motivational or uplifting or informative, or perhaps even annoying or reprimanding readers.

The message remains clear

Reading the columns written by Sarel, Joggie and Sandra this month, I see that although the words are different, the main message is the same – as a profession we will go nowhere fast unless we get involved, work together and communicate. Those three elements are crucial. If one is missing, the others won’t be able to work.

Each of the authors has an individual style of writing, and I always enjoy reading their columns. I love getting new insights into their characters, and I identify with the emotions invoked by their choice of words. Sarel, it scares me that you describe me so well – “… highly intelligent, have specific goals and ideas, generally relatively conservative, resistant to change and find it difficult to work together across perceived boundaries.” (What do you mean you were generalising about pharmacists? Maybe, but I choose to ignore the second half of what you said about me.) Joggie, are you sure I didn’t ghost-write your column for you? I identify totally with what you say about shortcomings and weaknesses, but I too know that the support we give each other keeps us relatively sane and definitely more productive. Sandra, you have definitely influenced my life and my being – your unique ability to find personal messages in even the most unexpected writings has often inspired me, and I know that we have developed not only a good working relationship but a precious friendship as well.

Coaxing cats

Although I have actually had a couple of dogs as pets, I have to admit that I have always been a cat person. My greatest ambition as a child was to run a cat farm. Sadly, that was my first ambition not to be realised.

I do however have two cats. They refuse to be owned. They will not be controlled, or herded, or even coax. They in turn own two humans, whom they control, herd and coax whenever they deem it necessary.

Each has a perfectly good cat bed, which is never used. They prefer to sleep cuddled up together on an armchair. Mine. My lovely, comfortable, wingback armchair. How do I keep them off it? The only thing that works is to pile hard covered books of various sizes so that it is totally inhospitable. And a complete nuisance if I want to sit there. But it works. For now. While the cats are deciding on their revenge.

Lorraine Osman