



A Piece of my Mind

Editorial Comment

The things they didn't tell us about themselves

I hope that the article on the Presidential Committee members gives you more insight into who they are and what they do. There are however things about them that they didn't say. Sometimes what we do in our spare time tells you more about us, or perhaps defines us better, than what we do at work.

Sarel Malan, our president, is a keen golfer, but if you offer him a Dom Pedro you'll need to know that he's very particular about them – I don't think he's found a restaurant in Pretoria that makes them to his specifications. Do you know the real reason that he moved from North West to the Western Cape? It's hard to find wine farms in North West.

Although I've turned into a visual person since getting involved with the *SAPJ*, I've always been more of an audio person. The timbre of someone's voice can determine how involved I get in what they're saying. There are a few people in the PSSA who would capture my full attention even if they were reading from a telephone directory. Andy Gray is one of them, Prof Rod Walker is another, and then we have our deputy president, Stéphan Möller. Stéphan followed a career in pharmacy rather than in singing. He's done well in pharmacy, but he's a consummate performer.

I'm a little concerned about Joe Ravele because he's one of those people who gives his all to the people around him. When I asked him what he does for fun nowadays, he said he pays attention to his family and his pharmacy. Actually, that does sound well balanced!

Joe and Gareth Kilian actually have something in common – they both love ballroom dancing. Before his passion for pharmacy consumed him, Joe was a Ballroom and Latin American champion in Limpopo! Gareth dances socially (you should see him and Nitsa Manolis dance together) but it seems as though his dogs force him to exercise on the beach. He also keeps tropical fish, but he reassured us that he is not growing his own sushi.

Christine Venter has found that moving from community pharmacy to the education and training needed in community pharmacies has given her a fascinating new career path. It doesn't stop her from having a social life, but it does take a lot of time and energy. She still doesn't have her own Harley Davidson. Yet. Luckily hubby does.

Dougie O, as he was affectionately known at Pharmacy Council, to distinguish him from Dougie D (Defty), is rather strange. Well, I find his hobbies strange. He's been involved in marathon running, sky

diving and bungee jumping. He even persuaded me to take a luge ride on Mount Ngongotaha in Rotorua, New Zealand – he was the fastest down the mountain and I was the slowest they've ever had. Nowadays, he's an advanced scuba diver and a keen underwater photographer.

Thabang Malatji is our latest addition to the pharmacy leadership clan. I've known him since he was a second year student, and it's been such a pleasure watching him grow in the profession. Now, how do we harness and grow the enthusiasm? So many student leaders disappear into obscurity, but hopefully it's because they find their niche in the profession and give it their all.

I must say that I was very amused at the creative questions that were given to account for the answer "42". Douglas Adams' trilogy of five books (go figure) in the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy has always been a firm favourite of mine, even when there were only three books in the trilogy!

Why have I told you all this?

Apart from the fact that I like to know everything about everyone and everything, I have also found that it's so much easier to work with someone when you know a little more about them than what appears on their business card. The socialisation of pharmacy practice has also made us interact with people differently – hiding away in an elevated dispensary doesn't work anymore.

When it comes to the PSSA, and to the SAPC now that I think about it, there are two aspects that impact its work and influence outcomes. The first includes the processes and procedures – or the constitution (or Act) and the regulations. What we do and how we go about it. The second aspect includes the personal and social characteristics.

The personal interactions have been the neglected aspect. I know that Prof Butler has spoken about it for years, but have we really applied it in practice? Some of our colleagues would say it doesn't matter – what counts is what you do and how you do it. Others reckon that you get the whole package – warts and all. Luckily I didn't find any warts when I started asking questions.

I guess the "warts and all" somehow forgets to tell us that you get the beauty spots as well. And it's that beauty that makes our leaders devote their time and energy to our profession.

Lorraine Osman