



A Piece of my Mind

Editorial Comment

Post-election musing

Stéphan wrote his column before the elections. I'm writing mine now to wrap up this issue of the *SAPJ*. The elections are done and dusted. Now the work begins.

I'm not a political commentator so I won't give in to the temptation to share my thoughts with you on this topic. Suffice it to say that I hope it isn't just Joe Public who is fed up with the state of the nation. Our newly elected government and our State President are also citizens and consumers. Surely they are fed up too? They don't have an easy job, or one that you and I would want. I won't speak on your behalf, but I certainly wish them well in their endeavours to put our country back on track to achieve the 2030 Vision.

National Development Plan 2030 – Our future, make it work

I've written about this before. I still believe that the Vision Statement is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry I've ever read.

Do these words not apply now, more than ever before? Or are they doomed merely to be wishful thinking?

*We know our leaders as we have elected them
and pledged them into office:*

- *They are wise in the use of our wealth*
- *Wise in knowing and understanding our wishes and needs*
- *Wise in expecting us to express ourselves to them in any appropriate manner we have agreed to be allowable*
- *Wise in not silencing those who criticise, but enable them, through our rules of engagement, to be even more rigorous in supporting a just society.*

Now is the time for these to become more than mere words, so that they truly describe the behaviour and actions of our leaders.

2030 is just around the corner. If remedial action is not taken now, it will pass unmarked as the opportunities to improve this country will have been wasted.

The halogen light that singses our arm hairs

The leaders cannot be expected to achieve our hopes and desires if we don't take an active role in making them materialise. Refiloe has hit the nail on the head with her column. You and I may not be the leaders, but we can sabotage the leader's efforts if we don't participate. And I know what our response will then be – oh, they failed because they wouldn't do anything about the problem.

Personalising the message in the work situation

I promise not to victimise you here. I'll use myself as the case study – why do I fail to be the most productive member of the team? By now, I've lived with myself long enough to recognise two important deficiencies – a low threshold of boredom, which makes attention to routine tasks extremely difficult, and obsessive-compulsive tendencies, which makes reworking already completed work a nightmare.

The low threshold of boredom has had its good side – I want to know everything about a person or a subject. If I'm writing something, I'm happy to spend days researching it. This happens even if I find the material I need right at the beginning of my search, and even if I already have enough material to satisfy the need for information.

Good enough doesn't feel good enough, so I'll rework something, and then rework it again. I'll search for exactly the right words or exactly the right illustration, which can be very time consuming. Meanwhile, the work was already adequate.

Verbalising this problem emphasises my main difficulties in meeting deadlines, which obviously impacts on the client, who is disadvantaged by my tardiness. Some people have perfected the art of singeing the arm hairs to get me moving, but others haven't. Oh dear. I had better stop before I trigger depression!

So that's my situation. What is yours? What do you need to do to improve the situation? (You're always welcome to share your thoughts with me!)

Fraud, Waste and Abuse Summit

It's interesting how quickly things can be organised when necessary. The Summit came only about 4 months (which included the festive season) after the Presidential Health Summit. The urgency of dealing with fraud in the healthcare sector was emphasised in October, and the Council for Medical Schemes was pretty quick off the mark with the FWA Summit.

The pharmacy examples given show how important this type of interaction is. Clearly, forensic investigations are sometimes hampered by a lack of understanding of practice processes and realities. The healthcare providers are therefore at a distinct disadvantage because the outcome of the investigation may be premised on impractical speculation. I hope that the professional associations will also have input into the forensic investigation process so that this situation can be resolved.



A challenge to other sectors of the PSSA

It's time to issue a challenge to the community, academic and industry pharmacists to involve themselves in something as commendable as SAAHIP's partnership with Operation Smile. I know that much of individual pharmacists' work quietly contributes towards social responsibility activities. Some of the PSSA branches also support good causes locally. But I would love to see the other sectors of the PSSA adopting and working to make a difference in one of the many needy communities in the country. Is that just a pipe dream?



A career change for Renier?

Introducing Dr Renier Coetzee, husband, father, pharmacist, lecturer, researcher, and now, fire fighter. When one of the chalets at the SAAHIP conference venue was on fire, Renier earned his fire marshal's certificate. I'm sure other pharmacists assisted, but I only have a photograph of Renier. Well done! (I'm glad everyone was safe.)

Lorraine Osman