

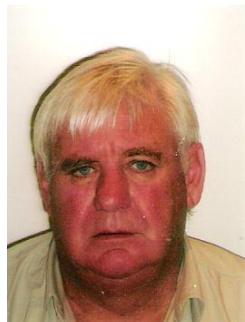


THATCHERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA DEKKERSVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Newsletter 5/2012

NEWSLETTER

6 August 2012



Mr Kosie Theunissen
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

After a very successful and satisfactory Annual General Meeting, we can report the following:

The new National Chairman of TASA is Mr Kosie Theunissen of Theunissen Thatching in the Western Cape. Mr Bertus Nieuwenhuis of Recon Thatchers of the Free State was named the National Vice Chairman and Mr David Hoffman of Hoffman's Thatching Specialists in Mpumalanga and Limpopo was re-elected as National Treasurer.

Mr John Smith of Biggarsberg Thatchers in Natal was again designated as the official representative of TASA on the SABS committees and Mr Cobus Maritz of Waterfront Thatchers in Northern Limpopo, was elected to serve as a member of the National Executive.

Our heartfelt congratulations go to these members and we wish them success with the important task ahead.

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AN EXPLANATION OF DECISIONS TAKEN

INPUT FROM MR HENK HORLINGS OF THE TRADE FEDERATION OF THATCHERS IN HOLLAND

The Chairman Mr Abrie Visagie expressed the view that the aim of the Annual General Meeting is to decide how the TASA is going to structure itself to promote thatched roofing. Products like Chromadeck and tiles are our competitors and not the contractors. Everybody is affected by an attitude of negativism for various reasons and the time has come to stand together. Contact breeds friendships and networking results in business opportunities.

The possibility exists that the International Thatching Society's Congress will be held in Cape Town next year. The venue and date will be decided in October 2012. The TASA delegation will depart on 5/6 October first to Holland and then to Germany. They will return on 10/11 October.

Mr Visagie's term of two years expires and a new management team must be elected. He thanked the management team and said that his term enriched his life.

He introduced Mr Henk Horlings, the "Technisch Secretaris" of the Trade Federation of Thatchers in Holland, our guest speaker and told the meeting that they experienced the same problems as the TASA.

Background

Mr Horlings told the delegates that his Trade Federation consisted originally of volunteers but it stagnated. The reason being that contractors were afraid of losing business if they get others involved and were therefore also negative towards training. The opposite actually resulted when the Trade Federation was reorganised.

In Holland exists at present 380 thatch contracting firms. Each of them in turn can have three to four contractors in operation. 50% of the firms belongs to father and son team. The son usually has his own business, but when there are a lot of work, father and son team forces.

The owner of a big operation is hands on and involved 50% of the time and the rest are spent on management activities. A contractor in Holland cannot afford to be not involved himself. Bankruptcy faces contractors dependant on the assistance of others.

85% of all contractors in Holland are members of the Trade Federation. The latter is well organised. Contractors have a competitive edge provided they are efficient. Big projects can only be undertaken when they join forces.

Through joining forces they protect their market and outside competitors are held at bay.

Solutions

1. Volunteers are done away with as members of management. Mr Horlings (a mechanical engineer) is appointed to manage the Trade Federation as a business with a separate Controlling Board. The members of the Board consist of bona fide thatch contractors.
2. Only bona fide thatch contractors can become members of the Trade Federation. They must be in possession of a diploma issued by the Federation after successful completion of training and exams.
3. Every owner of a business pays membership fees as well as the thatching contractor on the roof.
4. A website has been created to provide information to architects, clients etc.
5. A magazine "Het Drijfbord" is issued four times per year to members. Costs are covered through advertising.
6. Mr Holdings also does inspection of roofs at a fee. The main reason for the Federation's credibility is because of the corner stones of integrity and honesty Thatch contractors are not involved in inspections neither a co-member.
7. Only qualified thatch contractors may build roofs. The acceptable building standards and ethical code is thus known. Disputes are therefore resolved in terms of the training material and specifications.
8. All aspirant thatch contractors must attend a compulsory week long theoretical training course twice a year and do an apprenticeship with an existing thatch contractor (for a year at least) to qualify for the exams. A Training Board is responsible for the training. Membership of the Trade Federation is only possible when in possession of a Trade Federation diploma.
9. Research projects are undertaken in collaboration with Germany such as determining the quality of water reed used.
10. The producers of water reed in Germany work in harmony with the Trade Federation to protect and enhance the industry.

11. A Trade Fair is held yearly and exhibitions allow the public a first hand experience of material used like touching the grass to get a feel for it.
12. A manual with complete information is available and a CD Rom is handed out free of charge to interested parties.
13. Architects are provided with advice on request. A workshop for architects is also arranged.
14. Sponsors are obtained for school projects where the kiddies can get involved.
15. The Trade Federation as the knowledgeable body negotiate with the Government re standards and specifications.
16. "The user is king" is the motto of the Trade Federation and this outlook ensures a bright future for the trade.

These notes are explanatory to those mentioned in brief in the Minutes

Mr Visagie pointed out that the discussions around fire protection products have taken on an emotional slant. Members must serve aspects of mutual interest. Issues like fire retardant must not be allowed to divert attention from more important aspects requiring urgent attention such as the determination of R-values re. effective use of energy in SANS 10400 XA and SANS 204

We did not realise the implications until architects, municipalities and contractors contacted TASA in this regard. Control over construction in the Western Cape is sharpened up and the above aspect needs our urgent attention.

Mr Strydom advised that the available information is not accurate. He will undertake an experiment with small thatch roofs also to determine air flow.

Compilation of management and functioning

TASA in relation to its areas does not function properly. The Western Cape region managed to rotate on a regular basis and as relationships are built, they respect each other and internal issues are resolved amicably. But it is not necessarily the case in other regions

The following aspects were discussed:

- The role of TASA?
- How TASA must function?
- Must membership be differentiated?
- Is there conflict of interests?
- Who derives advantage from membership?
- What is the major issue: Product / Services?
- How must management be elected?
- Must TASA be managed as a business?
- Must membership fees for Associate members be a fixed amount or must they be allowed to pay more or employ sponsorships?

Proposals

- The TASA Constitution to be amended to only allow bona fide thatch contractors

(Clause 5.1.1 of the Constitution, the sentence "Associated members who are not thatching contractors" must be removed. This clause allowed 3 founding members namely Alternative

Structures, Firelab and Micon Coatings to enjoy full membership whilst other non thatch contractors are excluded from full membership.

- A management Board must be established that advises and not administer.
- TASA must be managed as a business entity and a competent person must be employed, with compensation, for i.e. one day per week to manage the Association.
- Membership fees to the amount of R63 400 is still outstanding and collection of the arrears doubtful.

Sponsorships must be obtained to pay the salary of the proposed manager.

- Mrs. Meintjes will fulfill the administration functions
- A Management Board to be constituted that functions separate from the business function (day to day management aspects) and members must rotate on a two yearly basis to ensure continuity.
- Areas must still function and events be arranged like a Thatching Fair on the basis of free participation.

The task of the newly elected Management Committee is to investigate proposals and important issues and come forward with proposals

The question of increased membership fees were not discussed but must receive urgent attention.

ISSUES WITH WHICH THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IS TASKED

- Training: No training facilities exist in the RSA.
Training Manual only available to members
- Construction and servicing of thatched roofs a major concern
- Marketing of TASA and procurement of sponsors.
- Grass/Reed producers and availability and quality of reed and grass
- R-values component (carbon footprint of thatch)
- Inspection of roofs and handling of disputes
- Awareness of specifications and requirements and availability of reliable information
- Involvement of members.
- Membership fees

NATIONAL ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION

A sincere thank you was expressed for the attendance and input by Mr Henk Horloings of the Trade Federation of Reed Thatchers in the Netherlands. He also prevailed over the adjudication of the Annual Photo Competition which consisted of only one category this year, re. "The Most Beautiful Thatch Roof."

The winners were as follows:

First prize:
Sponsor:

Theunissen Thatching
Megacover Brokers

: R3 000



Second prize : Lucas Quality Thatchers
Sponsor: CWI Wire : R2 000



Third prize : Biggarsberg Thatchers
Sponsor: Thatch Risk Acceptances : R1 000



Confidence is expressed that the new National Executive will lead TASA to new heights and that members will give their full cooperation to initiatives that will be taken. The current economic climate presents significant challenges, but with our members' support, it can be tackled with confidence.

Kind regards

Kosie Theunissen
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

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