

## **Report of the Management Committee**

I am glad to be able to report a successful 2014 year, both from a financial stability and a successful 2014 Durban National Tournament point of view. These go together with what looks to be a successful inbound tour from UK Seniors that is a month away as I write but that will be completed before we meet in Bloemfontein. More detail will be found under the Tour report section of this report.

Other successful developments include the moves by societies who find advantage from improved communications and administration via websites and SGUSA initiatives to improve the tournament administration in the same way.

However the success of the year is tainted somewhat by the decision made by Jetske Kingma recently to join the ranks of the gainfully unemployed and lead a life of leisure. Jetske has been a welcome addition to SGUSA since she was appointed in 2006. Her arrival brought a refreshing new professionalism to the running of the SGUSA office and a big improvement to the administration of the National Tournament and the services provided to the host committees. I don't know anyone else who equals her ability to put names and faces together and her personal knowledge of almost every Senior who has attended a tournament adds to her friendly efficiency. Over the years she has assisted every Mancom member in their portfolios and, almost by osmosis, has absorbed the responsibility for many areas into the secretariat.

SGUSA shares Jetske's services with the Gauteng Society where she is responsible for the whole administration and match secretary functions as well as the plethora of other activities each Society has.

We are looking to appoint a suitable successor and with luck will be able to introduce that person during the tournament.

In reporting to Members last year I commented on the changing face of golf worldwide and of the necessity to face up to the challenges those changes bring.

This year has seen further areas become apparent which affect not only all Seniors and the Societies and Clubs they belong to, but all golfers. We are seeing lifestyle changes that have moved many of the younger generation from golf into other more family inclusive activities. Club membership does not enjoy the popularity it had and economic pressures have made golfers look for cleverer ways to have their golf without having to follow the old way of club membership. The popularity of virtual clubs and Play-more-golf style cheaper memberships has contributed to ensuring the requirement for a new approach to be followed by clubs wishing to survive. Regrettably, SAGA has been seriously lacking in addressing the future and the challenges it brings.

Seniors is not excluded from the problems affecting the industry..

The larger societies are struggling to maintain memberships at the same level as in the past and there is no doubt that a decrease in the number of member rounds is being seen countrywide. Few Societies have long waiting lists and the current membership level of some is not considered sustainable. Although Societies are careful in inviting new entrants there is an undoubted temptation to allow the quality standard to drift downwards in filling quotas

This leads once again to a consideration of Society membership quotas and will be a discussion point during the Governing Body AGM. We believe that a reduction in quota may add to the desirability of membership and an ability to review activity levels of members more critically.

The level of entrants to the Bloemfontein Nationals gives serious cause for concern. For the first time ever received fewer entries than available places and it was necessary to ask all Societies to do all in their power to fill gaps. Suddenly, gone was the pride in being selected to attend, as was the pressure point of ensuring good attendance throughout the year to qualify.

We have had to reconsider whether all venues are suitable to hold a Nationals and whether future problems experienced by some clubs that may lead to either closures or presentation of sub standard courses that that may not be acceptable to members and lead to further reductions in entrants.

Indeed we need to address again whether an annual National Tournament is what members want. There are many alternatives and we will need collective wisdom to choose the correct one. There are several other matters relating to the National Tournament that require resolution. These include maximum handicaps, costs and entry fees, golf course options for host societies and the possibility of running a single course lower entry tournament.

The Management Committee held a daylong planning session at the end of January to formulate a suggested strategy to take the organisation into the future, to ensure its sustainability and yet maintain the integrity of the principles laid down by our founding forefathers.

The Seniors organisation in South Africa is somewhat unique in its format when compared with the UK and USA Seniors. Even the Australian and Chilean Seniors have different practices.

The UK Seniors have one single organisation that controls all members countrywide. They do not hold a single Annual Tournament, participating instead in two regional two day meetings and a large number of matches between Seniors and host clubs where the size of the fields is small..

Australian Seniors are regionally based regions and also do not hold a National Championship, rather holding an interprovincial trophy tournament over a lower number of rounds.

Could either of these models, or indeed any other prove better than the present for South African Seniors?

South Africa has a greater number of Seniors than any other country. The prestige of an invitation to Seniors membership seems more desirable there than here. Should we not revert to lower numbers and enhance the desirability factor?

The numbers of members in each Society are widely divergent and range from 37 in the Northern Cape to 240 in Gauteng. Recently the Governing Body only allowed the formation of a new Society where the number of golfers in that region justified it and a critical mass of members sufficient to host a National Tournament could be achieved.

Should we not revisit these criteria for all of the present Societies?

Constitutionally, Gauteng is responsible to provide the Management Committee and it is located in Johannesburg. From time to time there have been rumblings of dissatisfaction at the Gauteng influence on SGUSA. Has the time not come to review the current situation and consider some other province assuming this role?

At the end of the session Mancom identified a number of issues that need to be reviewed in addressing the sustainability of the organisation in South Africa and whether we are offering members what they want in their ongoing membership. Mancom will table these during the Governing Body and member AGMs and will ask all Societies to give meaningful consideration to them.

Further matters that enjoyed discussion and that will require policy decisions relate to the financial sustainability of the organisation, sponsorship, the role of Seniors in promoting golf development for other needy bodies, our interaction with other international Seniors organisations, particularly within the Southern African region and the National tournament computer program.

We then propose convening a meeting later in the year where all societies will be represented and where we can discuss all these subjects and choose a suitable strategy that provides members with what they want.

## **National Tournament Report Durban 2014**

### **Tour Report**

An invitation for a team of four players to participate in the Seniors International Meeting in Deauville, France, in July 2014 was received but due to insufficient interest from Societies we were not able to enter a team.

SGUSA has received an invitation and will be sending a team of four players under the captaincy of Stuart Morris to participate in the King Leopold Challenge to be contested in July 2015. We wish them a very enjoyable and successful trip to Belgium.

During February and March this year we will be hosting an 18 day tour to South Africa by a group of sixteen UK Seniors and their wives. The tour will commence in Cape Town with cocktails at the V&A Hotel at the Waterfront on the 23rd February and after a five days in Cape Town the touring party will proceed by coach to Fancourt in George and then on to Durban and Johannesburg. A total of

twelve games of golf will be played including eight matches against South African Seniors before the tour culminates in an official farewell dinner at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on the 13th March.

We will report verbally on the results of the tour during the AGM.

SGUSA has accepted an invitation from Agosech, the Senior Golfers' Society of Chile, for a party of twelve South African Seniors and their wives to visit Chile during November 2015. The team has been selected and we wish them a wonderful fun filled tour.

The inbound tour reserve will, as planned, be partially used in covering Societies costs of hosting the UK touring party. However Mancom considers the reserve sufficient and will recommend to the Governing Body to stop the further outbound tour levy applied to future touring Seniors

### **IT Report SGUSA Systems**

The IT portfolio within Mancom was established to identify future systems requirements that are needed to support SGUSA and, in particular, the national tournament.

In reviewing the current system that is used for the administration of the national tournament, it was identified that the obsolete technology utilized represents a risk to the smooth operation of the tournament. A more state of the art approach that involves moving the application to a web based solution has been proposed.

As a consequence of this approach, it is logical that Mancom assumes responsibility for the maintenance of a SGUSA website covering all relevant aspects of the organization. This does not include the various society websites that will contain appropriate links to the SGUSA website.

As a first step in this initiative, a website specifically for the 2015 tournament was created and appropriate information has been loaded on this site. This information will be enhanced as further scheduling and administrative details become available.

Following the Mancom planning session and the proposals regarding the future of the national tournament, it is highly probable that the system required to support the proposed model will not just be a rewrite of the current system within a web environment. It is recommended that some certainty be obtained about the future model to be adopted prior to embarking upon any new systems development.

Irrespective of the future national tournament model, online entry for tournaments is certain to occur as the process will be enhanced by this facility.

## **Financial Report and Accounts**

A summary of the Union's financial figures as at 31st December 2014 is included in the following pages. These figures are at present being audited and will be available prior to the AGM's.

The accounts for the year again reflect a positive situation for the Union with expenses and income in line with

expectations with the exception of a few significant amounts. These are:

- Our Investment in the Money Market through Stanlib Ltd was unexpectedly impacted by the demise of ABIL. We have

decided to take a full provision of the amount apportioned to ABIL of R27 500. It is likely that we will recover portion or all of this amount in due course.

- a provision against the value of Senior Moments Books of R17 950. The Books have now been provided for in full.

- The Stock Exchange experienced a severe correction towards the end of the year. This impacted on the value of our

shares and we have therefore reduced the Revaluation Reserve by R17 226. A realignment of our stockholding resulted

in a surplus of R29 403. The Revaluation Reserve is still positive at R334 940 confirming that our Investment value

has been retained.

- Total Income from Investments was well up on the previous year increasing by R25 348.

National Sponsorship was unchanged at R 160 112. The Caddie Tournament cost to the Union was up by R16 663

to R 171 481. The National Tournament in Durban showed a surplus of R 33 445.

The Cash at Bank and on Hand is high due to a deposit being held on behalf of the UK Tour participants. It was decided to place this money on call with SA Stockbrokers.

## **Budget 2015**

After allowing for the exceptional items mentioned above, the budget reflects very little change from the

2014 total surplus figures.

The Budget surplus is R92 657 against an actual of R107 207 in 2014.

National Sponsorship is down by R50 000 due to withdrawal of the Grants sponsorship. The Golf development budget

has been reduced accordingly

This Budget continues to show that Affiliation Fees do not cover the Administrative costs.

## **Closing Remarks**

Many thanks are due to the members of the Management Committee who give so freely of their time and expertise in the running of SGUSA. Those members are Rob Wassenaar, Ross Grainger,

Keith Fletcher and John Brownrigg. This year we co-opted Alan Bulmer to the committee to make use of his special IT knowledge and guidance and, given the necessity to live and operate in a modern technical world, will make this a permanent portfolio appointment.

My personal thanks go to each of them.

To Jetske, more than just thanks, we share in the joy of, and wish her much happiness in her newly found lifestyle! You have added much to our organisation and we will miss you!

John Hare

Chairman

Management Committee

Senior Golfers Union of SA