



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – 2021 SAMAA Annual General Meeting

This report covers the activities of the SAMAA administration office, the General Manager and the Assistant General Manager, for the reporting period March 2020 to March 2021.

The year 2020 will for a long time, and by several generations, be known as the chaos year, a year that saw a worldwide pandemic confine SAMAA members to their homes, and preventing them from exercising their beloved hobby, or at least a vital part of it. Yes, they were able to at least build and start some projects while in the hard lock-down period, if they had enough supplies. Flying at the 150 SAMAA-registered flying sites and clubs was taboo for a loooong three months, and towards the end of June, the withdrawal symptoms resulted in many telephone calls to the SAMAA office: "When will we be able to fly. I see that golf and tennis has been allowed, and general aviation is able to perform currency and maintenance flights, and church gatherings are now possible?" A few "entrepreneurs" tried inventive approaches, like "our club has a model car track, and SAMAA has no jurisdiction over this activity. By the way, I'm going to take my model aircraft with me". One other: "We are organizing a church service at our club, and we're going to take our aeries along!"

Anyway, by early July, some common sense prevailed, and the SA Aero Club and the SA Civil Aviation Authority, by the grace of the Dept of Transport, allowed some freedom, but only after submission of a detailed COVID-19 risk-adjusted management plan by our clubs; limited numbers, no visitors, masks, sanitising, social distancing, no socializing...basically a fly-and-waai policy. Many clubs complied, by using a simple template, with specifics for each club. Happy members, and clubs, for the most part. One member tried to blame the SAMAA management for not being allowed to take his children to the club, something entirely out of the SMCs ambit.

The rest of 2020 continued under various levels of lockdown, and ever-confusing regulations, late issues of government gazettes, erroneous interpretations, double-speak by our country's beaurocrats, and false news, coupled with massive, massive fraud, corruption, and embezzlement of public funds, meant to bring relief to the stricken populace. Luckily, with the right protocols in place, several clubs and groups were allowed to stage fly-ins, and the Power Nationals was able to take place in September at Henley, albeit somewhat smaller, with only four disciplines being contested.

The SAMAA management took a precautionary decision to send Linda and I home, to conduct the administrative chores from our homes. This was a little disruptive, but practical. We were not able to access the Denel Kempton Park campus anyway. The usual functions of membership renewals and issue of membership cards continued, and meetings were conducted via Zoom. By early July, Linda and I were able to return to the offices, and the daunting task of receiving, checking, and issuing certificates of compliance with COVID-19 regulations was undertaken. Since clubs were not yet fully operational, there were very few, if any, proficiency tests, and some members were a little tardy in renewing their membership.

Late January of 2021, the SAMAA received notice from DenelProp that it intends to fill the entire building that we had been fortunate to occupy for twelve years, to the National Road Traffic Management Corporation, and we received all of 14 days notice to vacate our offices. With negotiation we were able to extend this to 7 February, when the Great Trek saw an exodus of all the accumulated documentation, equipment, furniture, historical artifacts, and two staff members. Many thanks to Marthinus Potgieter, and Dean Grobbelaar, for offering their help with this exercise; it is deeply appreciated. Linda is working from her home in Witfield, and I from my home in Alberton. With modern technology, we are able to offer all the same services and benefits to the membership. Our search is ongoing, for a permanent home for the SAMAA, a facility that belongs to the SAMAA, with all the options of an administrative office, a museum, library, hall of fame, etc. This may be a converted house, but careful thought must be given to the area, since suburbs tend to degenerate in standards over time, and an influx of migrants may lead to property values falling. A smallish home in a gated community complex is probably the answer, and the SMC will continue to explore all the viable options. For now, most of the equipment, documents, models, plans, furniture and the like is stored in two commercial warehouse units.





South African Model Aircraft Association

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Our SAMAA clubs and members have had reasonable freedom of airspace, and we are grateful to club managements for their responsible attitude. Our insurance broker and provider threw a bit of a curved ball at us, when it came time for renewal of the policy. We found to our dismay that member-to-member cover was no longer offered, and the dreaded airside exception meant that our members who were operating from full-size aerodromes and air strips, were no longer covered for damage to full-size aircraft, and airfield infrastructure. With protracted negotiation, we were able to have the policy modified and altered, but it is still not ideal. Specifically, the limited cover that is offered, at a much higher excess, for damage to property on full-size airfields. This affects clubs and members that operate from full-size facilities. The SMC makes sensible distinctions between operational airfields and aerodromes, from farm strips and facilities where a trike may be sitting under spider-webs in a rusty shed, where the risk of an incident, and the extent of damage to property may be extremely low.

The SMC is acutely aware of the drop in membership numbers, and we are discussing means of attracting juniors to the hobby. Linda has been successful in appealing to lapsed members to re-join the SAMAA, and we will continue our efforts in this regard. Membership renewals and new applications are daily processed, speedily and efficiently, and membership cards sent the very same day. Members are able to visit Linda and I to make renewals, but membership cards are only issued from Linda's abode, and members may visit to collect their cards, but only by appointment, and observing the COVID-19 protocols. We are investigating the dispatch of membership cards, in bulk, to clubs. We would have to rely on club chairmen to distribute these to their members, and at least we can have reasonable certainty that members will receive their cards. However, members are strongly encouraged to visit the new SAMAA website, at www.samaa.org.za. It is in a continuous state of improvement and upgrade, by our host, Easyweb. Visit the membership programme and log-in, to manage your own affairs, and even print a paper membership card. Yes, I now the credit card-style card is a nice-to-have, but in the current climate of a severe lack of service delivery by our once-proud post office, a self-service portal is a good option.

The members of the SAMAA management committee continue to serve the membership, by virtual meetings with each other, and authorities. There is continuous oversight, great regular communication, compliance, competition, development, promotion, and much more. The SMC is tasked to lead the association and to provide guidance. Linda and I would like to thank the members of the management committee. All of them are volunteers, and they give freely of their available time to provide assistance. The SMC members have regular contact with each other, and there is robust debate on a variety of issues, to the benefit of our association and its members. Danie Potgieter, Burt Botha, Alec Groenewald, Johan Blom, Linda Dold, Juanita Smith, Roland Suhrmuller, and I, care deeply for the welfare of our members and clubs, and your support is greatly appreciated. We occasionally receive messages of gratitude, and unfortunately also the occasional gripe. One of our prominent members and a previous administrator has a very true belief: "If you can keep 80% of your members happy, you ought to be satisfied. The other 20% must accept that democracy dictates the course of action".

The SAMAA History Preservation Project continues to receive support. In the last year, I have sourced and received many historical photographs, which are stored on the hard drive. These are published in the SAMAA News, paying homage to our members who have shaped our association; many of these pioneers are no longer with us. The rest of the historical paraphernalia is currently in storage, and hopefully in the near future, the SAMAA will have a permanent home where members may visit to view first-hand this wonderful material. In the last few months, there have been Facebook posts of some of the historical model aircraft, and members are encouraged to share these posts with FB friends.

To close this report, I appeal to every SAMAA member to use your time at the club, or at the hobby shop, or at events, to positively promote aeromodelling, to promote your club, and to promote the SAMAA, and its activities. We all share a common responsibility to grow the hobby, so that our Association can become stronger. Encourage a new member to join, and wherever possible, get 'n young potential enthusiast to participate, to build and fly model aircraft, and to become a junior member of the SAMAA.



Associate member of the Aero Club of South Africa. Affiliated to the
Fédération Aéronautique Internationale.
The SAMAA is a non-profit, public-benefit organisation, PBO Reg. No. 930030082.





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The future of our hobby depends on the younger enthusiasts.

The SAMAA is a respected recreational and sporting association, with organized and structured activities. We conduct our affairs in a responsible, accountable, transparent, professional, and self-managed way. We have a duty to our Association, its members, our clubs, the public, and our hobby/sport.

Bob Skinner

Alberton. 4 March 2021



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