Just how many balls does the Association currently juggle in the air…. some relatively small like the possibility of IADR fee subsidies for sessional academic staff (sadly cannot be done) whilst others are huge: representing the profession on pertinent legal issues at the HPCSA or handling extensive publicity campaigns or managing that all important Coding. All members should be apprised of these ongoing and productive activities and how better than the frequent SADA Communiques?

Several communiques have dealt with the forthcoming Association Congress to be held in March. By the time you read this, the Early Bird option will have come and gone… but never fear, the Association will be delighted to register you now and you will still have the opportunity to revel in three days of comprehensive contemporary dentistry, led by some thirty erudite lecturers. Refer to recent Communiques 27th, 29th January and to the SADA Congress website www.sadacongress.co.za.

We commence with a challenge: David Grier will probe the concept: *When the going gets tuff, the tuff get going*. An inspiring start to the Congress. Over the following three days, Saturday through Monday, prosthetics, orthodontics, endodontics, implantology, periodontology, legal issues, aesthetic dentistry, practice management… what has been omitted…. Oh yes, materials… all will be considered, and by the leaders in the field. Of course delegates will sit down to a gorgeous Gala Dinner, there will be other social events. Did you know all this.. or did the Communiques slip past?

A recent and most important communique announced the new dispensation on Membership Fees. Whilst Maretha Smit has indeed been visiting various Branches to expound on the concepts, it may be worth including some aspects in this Communique. Essentially members now have a choice apart from Core Membership, they may elect to enrol for one or both of a further two options.

Core Membership ensures members have the full benefit of the essential commitment of the Association to represent Dentistry at every level nationally and internationally. This is no routine exercise but demands a constant vigilance and a full preparedness to invoke every energy to ensure that the Voice of the profession is heard …. and listened to. In a word, this is Advocacy of the profession in every forum. Without this, it is more than likely that we would indeed feature less and less in every issue affecting Health Care. Then the more mundane tasks of Coding, of Publicity, of handling the DPL administration, are basic to the Association… did I say “mundane”? Perhaps these may be daily activities but how absolutely central to our profession. Core membership is the foundation of commitment to the community of the Dental Health Care Team.

This Core category of membership involves an annual fee of R 2850 (including VAT).

Now comes the enterprising developments for members to identify and to select opportunities for further membership benefits. There are two options, Education and Advisory Services.

Education… the option is a double commitment, for on the one hand the Association accepts the role of provider, whilst on the other hand the member simply commits to being the beneficiary…. all Education benefits are aimed at enhancing expertise and acumen, at facilitating the acquisition of CPD points, and ultimately providing the base for more confident and successful practice. Participation in the option ensures members have full access to Branch events, may take advantage of all CPD events including...
the Journal CPD questionnaire option, will be considered on application for Research Grants through the Dentistry Development Foundation... and most pertinently, offers a full R1000.00 discount for registration to the annual SADA Congress. This option will cost members R1140(including VAT). Seems an excellent bargain especially when the member attends the Congress!

The second option is Advisory Services. During the complexities of professional life, it is almost inevitable that at some stage we will earnestly seek guidance from our peers... whether a serious matter involving an HPCSA enquiry after patient complaint, or simply some information on how to interpret the Codes. It is now the individual member who may decide whether to subscribe to this option. Quite evidently if a member is in retirement there may be little need for taking the service. Busy practitioners may well be advised to subscribe. The annual cost is R1140 (including VAT).

So there is a new dispensation and members have a flexible membership package. Understand that the Association is committed to providing the best services at all times. Frequently asked questions include the enquiry as to whether a member may adjust the package at any time, to add (or remove) an option? The answer is yes, there will be continued flexibility. Perhaps it is self-evident that the hope is that the majority of members will elect to subscribe to the full package.

Then a recent communique forwarded on behalf of the HPCSA advises members that it remains the responsibility of the patient to secure authorisation from Medical Aid Schemes.

A bitter-sweet communique sent in early December invites applications to two positions at Head Office. We have most sadly lost the presence of Dr Mehroon Khan and Dr Khanyi Makwakwa. Both served the Association with such dedication and commitment and distinction. Both are moving to positions where their experience at the Association will be of high benefit. Both will remain full members of the Association. We wish both every success in their new enterprises. Now we await with keen anticipation the appointment of new staff and look forward to absorbing them in turn into the fabric of the Association.

Why did Joanne Rowling choose the owl as the bearer of letters to Harry Potter? The owl is wise...and the regular SADA Communiques are invaluable sources of intelligence for members. Regular perusal of the inbox, electronic or owl, will pay great dividends.