

2010  
SASHT  
CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Prof Elize S van Eeden  
*North-West University*  
*Elize.vaneeden@nwu.ac.za*

Dear members and Executive Committee members of the SASHT. Today, 25 September 2010, I am also making a little bit of history in my personal academic career by presenting a first annual report for the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT) after the 11 years that Mr Jimmy Verner has run the leadership, and preceded by equally effective leaders such as Mr Bruce Mohammed, Prof Rob Siebörger, Dr Martiz Broodryk, Dr Simon Kekana and Prof Martin Trümpelmann (also a prominent founder of the Yesterday and Today/Gister en Vandag Journal now known as *Yesterday&Today* only). I guess then that, if viewed from an even broader perspective, I am also the first women ever to lead the SASHT. When willingly and passionately accepting the position as secretary (and later as secretary treasurer) of the SASHT in 1994 I never thought that I will still be around in a leading position. A quite interesting moment I want to share with you during my nomination as Secretary of the SASHT (by the leadership of the time) in 1994 at the then Boland Educational College, was when the well-known writer of History books for Schools, Ms Emelia Potenza, remarked to the SASHT Chair person, with a tone of frustration in her voice: "A woman does not always have to fill the secretary position only". Definitely I was not that prepared or informed then to fill any other position, but I did appreciate her willingness to share her feelings and activism regarding the role that women can fulfil in leading positions. By remembering this incident, does not at all take away the gratitude we owe (and I for that matter) to the previous leadership who each, in its own right, contributed to the activities and focus of the SASHT as the only specific professional History Society for Educators/teachers country wide to act as voice in many ways, and as a platform for any trends and activities in History in all education phases. Also the 2009-2010 leadership within the Executive Committee (Jimmy Verner, Patrick McMahon; Byron Bunt; Johan Wasserman; Simon Haw; Paul Haupt; Fiona Frank; Gill Sutton; Fredah Makwena and Walter Ntsimane) are indispensable and without any of them I would not have been able to walk in front.

The Annual Report to be presented, is divided in six sections:

**PERSONALIA:**

The Executive Committee members that have stepped down as Executive members for the next term (2010-2011) is:

- Prof Johan Wassermann;
- Ms Gill Sutton;
- Mr Pravin Ram; and
- Ms Fredah Makwena

We are very glad that they are willing to remain as SASHT members and on behalf of the rest of the remaining Executive I want to thank each and all for their enthusiastic contributions the past year (and for some two years and more).

An Executive Member that has sadly passed away the past month is Mr Walter Ntsimane of the North-West Province. The SASHT Executive will try to get hold of his family to pass on our condolences on behalf of all the members of the SASHT.

The outcome, as a result, is that five positions in the SASHT Executive Committee became vacant, and should be filled.

To all SASHT members busy with contributions in textbooks or in other fields of contributing to History as subject/discipline, good luck and may you reap the benefit after having sowed so passionately!

**SASHT FOCUS:**

Some members occasionally enquire about the focus of the SASHT. Apart from the fact that the objectives of the SASHT can be located on the [www.sashtw.org.za](http://www.sashtw.org.za) website under the SASHT constitution, the early *Yesterday&Today's* also are useful in this regard. I nevertheless exchange them again as a reminder to all on what we are busy with and our focus for many years now:

- Improve contacts between educators of training at tertiary level with teachers in the broad educational field;
- Renew training in the didactics/methodology of History education;
- Utilise the expertise of educators teaching History to assist with the training of future History teachers;
- Debate continuously the content of basic and advanced educational programmes in the training of History teachers with the intention of continuing to improve quality;

- Make History educators and student teachers aware of the relation between History as academic discipline and the didactics/methodology of teaching History at school level to keep abreast with development and academic debates;
- Encourage educators of History to strive towards achieving and sustaining high academic standards in the teaching methodology and approach towards, amongst others, controversial topics;
- Make educators of History and student teachers in History aware of the relevance/value of History for the existence of communities and nations in general.

Perhaps, in a next report that will fall within the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the SASHT's existence, a deliberation on HOW the SASHT has thus far achieved these goals, if at all, should be a goal in at least the SASHT Executive. My personal view is that much has been achieved but these achievements can't be flawless. There always are and will be a space for improvement.

#### **ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST YEAR, Sept 2009 – Sept 2010:**

The Executive Committee has in 2009 decided to distribute the SASHT workload into many portfolios to avoid that one person does all the work and to start trying to search for some creativity in positions and fields where some innovation and creativity is desperately required. For many Executive Members the first year in a specific portfolio was a learning curve, and so we hope that the 2010-2011 term will pave the way for a more dynamic involvement with portfolio positions so that each position can be skilfully defined, accepted and added as part of the extending effort of a more complete constitution (also see remarks later on the constitution). A feedback then on all the portfolios:

#### Organising the 2010 Conference at Golden Gate National Park-Brandwag Hotel (managed by the SASHT Executive Committee)

- \* To organise the first commercial conference (without any conference host) was a mission on its own but well worth it;
- \* Though the venue originally was aimed to be the University of the Free State, circumstances did not allow for its realisation, but the Executive pulled through to still host the conference in the Free State Province. Without any hesitation I can say that the SASHT Executive has lived up to expectations to help and to provide support where it was required of them. Great thanks then to especially Secretary Byron Bunt; Treasurer Jimmy Verner; Paul Haupt and Patrick McMahan in the Website "seat" as well as Fiona Frank and Simon Haw for being willing to undertake what was required of them during the conference. I could not have managed if it was not for your enthusiastic support and assistance.

May I then specifically mention Patrick who also, as always in whatever task may I add, did an outstanding service as Master of Ceremonies during this conference. This in turn helped me so much to focus on other tasks that were required. It also was the first year that I did not have to worry about registration, money etcetera. Byron and Jimmy, you did extraordinary well. Thank you!

Yesterday & Today-publication (managed by Elize v Eeden and the Y&T Editorial Board)

- \* The October 2009 Y&T was published in May 2010. It was difficult to rush towards an October-November 2009 date for publication because all the papers, presented at the 2009 Conference at Crawford College, Johannesburg had to be critically peer reviewed by all Executive members and other peer reviewers and some Y&T Editorial Advisory Committee members;
- \* The NWU is still responsible for funding the annual publication of the Y&T but it is hoped that the application for accreditation at the Department of Education (DoE) in June 2010 will be successful so that the SASHT can run the publication of the Y&T on its own funds. The SASHT is grateful to the NWU that came to the rescue of the Journal in 2006 when the first revived edition was published after eight years of no publication and only Newsletters as a form of communication to members;
- \* The Editorial Board will be revised before the October 2010 edition is printed in early 2011. The need for a Book Review Editor (with its own team of review readers) is required. The SASHT Executive should appoint a Committee member in this regard;
- \* 150 copies of the Y&T are annually printed and the cost per edition amounts roughly to R15 000-R16 000.

SASHT e-Newsletter (managed by Simon Haw & Johan Wassermann)

- \* From Sept 2009 to Sept 2010 three editions of the SASHT E-Newsletter has been compiled and electronically distributed;
- \* From the feedback by users it appears to be a welcome addition to the offerings the SASHT provides;
- \* Simon and Johan are thanked for their active involvement in having successfully established the e-Newsletter. If SASHT members continue supporting the Newsletter with a variety of hands on practical and deliberating contributions, the Newsletter can only be successful;
- \* Due to Johan Wassermann's resignation as Executive Committee member, this task will be a solo effort by Simon Haw as from Sept 2010 to Sept 2011;
- \* SASHT members that are willing to invest some time as regional reporters of information to the e-Newsletter, will be welcomed. Please do correspond with Simon in this regard.

SASHT Website [www.sashtw.org.za](http://www.sashtw.org.za) (managed by Patrick McMahon & Paul Haupt)

- \* The SASHT website is the oldest among the three history societies in South Africa. It was established in August 2006, and the need for 2011 is to provide a refreshing look and a wider variety of content as options to explore;
- \* Other needs for the website are to make it more users friendly;
- \* Patrick and Paul will soon be in touch again with the Webmaster controllers 3Gi to finalise possibilities for doing the remaking themselves without making use of 3Gi, which was not always perceived as that helpful (unless they are involved and paid for broader maintenances);
- \* The Conference detail for 2010 was the most important item to deal with. Also the 2009 conference papers, photographs etc. (and eventually the October edition of the *Yesterday&Today*) were loaded on the website;
- \* It was mentioned that the South African Historical Society (SASHS) also has obtained the facility of a website in the past two years, and that the SASHT can now learn from them regarding possibilities in maintaining readers refreshed to often visit the SASHT website;
- \* The publishers Oxford, Macmillan (and even others) will have to be asked to what extent they still want to maintain their position on the SASHT website (also financially) otherwise, with no financial input they should be removed;
- \* A section on News/Smalls hosting a variety of options should be considered;
- \* Patrick and Paul are thanked for their continuous efforts to seek a way forward to function independently.

Two portfolios within the Executive I have continuously been in touched with since Sept 2009 to 2010 were Jimmy in the Treasury position and Byron Bunt, running all the Secretariat obligations. I gladly reports as follow:

Treasury: (managed by Jimmy Verner)

The 2009-2010 terms within all SASHT executive Committee operations were the first to see the division again of the Treasury and Secretariat positions. I am very relieved that we were able to divide the two positions again because the load simply is too heavy for one person. Jimmy Verner did what was required in a meticulous way and with painstaking precision. For this I greatly thank him for his time and enthusiasm. Though the outcome of all the payments for the conference are not yet finalised, it is hoped that a small profit will be possible.

Secretariat: (managed by Byron Bunt)

After close to 15 years of running the Secretary position before Byron accepted the nomination as secretariat, I know exactly what it takes to organise conferences, to communicate with members, to correspond in many ways and to be the heart beat of all the SASHT Executive's doings. Byron started to

gradually find his feet into some of these tasks and he did so with a great deal of willingness and positiveness, even when I bombarded him with activities and needs. It's necessary that the Secretariat and the Chairperson should work well together and are not miles away from each other because it is of importance to have regular meetings between the two. Thanks Byron for your extraordinary patience as team member being the closest to the Chairperson which sometimes may not be the best rosy place to be! We appreciate your share in ensuring a successful 2010 conference!

Regional reporting and profile (Managed by Pravin Ram & Fredah Makwena)

Perhaps the weakest section currently in the SASHT structure is or was its inability thus far to find/recruit SASHT members that are willing to invest some time on an annual basis to act as regional representatives. Pravin Ram and Fredah Makwena filled positions to help progress towards achieving just this, but eventually it was realised by the Executive Committee that a new approach is required. A thinking along the lines of the benefits of a regional coordinator profile in which the following activities can be expected from such a position, should be considered by the SASHT Executive and its members:

The Regional Coordinator should:

- \* Recruit regional member(s) from the SASHT subscribed membership list;
- \* Coordinate regional member(s) to contribute in the following ways:
  - » Distribute information when receiving it from the Regional Coordinator that receives it in turn from the Secretary;
  - » Request for information; regional contacts; research and teaching contributions to be loaded on the SASHT website and/or to be utilised in other portfolio needs such as the e-Newsletter and in marketing etc;
  - » To request communication with the Provincial DoE and Subject Advisors in identifying needs in History on especially GET and FET levels that could be addressed in regional SASHT workshops in which some members of the SASHT can be recruited and become involved due to their skills and experience.
- \* Explore ways to be creative; vibrantly communicate and to open other ways of chaining regions and educators of History in regions together to become united in the issues and activities that concerns their subject and profession.

Perhaps the 2010-2011 term will bring forth some development in this regard so that the SASHT can progress towards a vision that has long been neglected. Not because of a lack of willingness but simply because the capacity was not always in place or available to do so.

Conferences/general: (Managed by Gill Sutton)

It was Gill's idea that the 2010 conference should take place in the Free State Province. She has pulled tremendous efforts in August 2009 to commit the Free State University and its Rector, Prof Jonathan Jansen (as key note speaker for 2010) to buy in to this possibility. Though a commitment was obtained, circumstances eventually did not turn out as it was hoped for. It was then that the Day Management of the Executive Committee had decided on Golden Gate and to approach Prof H Giliomee as Key note speaker after many other efforts. I want to thank Gill for her contribution of two years in the SASHT Executive team. As the smiling one she always was more than willing to make a difference where it was required of her. Thanks Gill, we will miss you!

Publishers: (Managed by Fiona Frank)

This newly required portfolio, as from 2009 still ache (though not unexpectedly!), with growing pains. Fiona was dumped into the deep side only to find her way and to eventually develop a structure for this portfolio on which the SASHT can build in future. To identify publishers willing to invest in the SASHT website through a publishing of their products in History on the website; and to approach publishers that's willing to display at SASHT Conference at a cost as well as to link up with publishers willing to provide complimentary history books to be reviewed, are huge assignments. From a SASHT perspective, they can be very rewarding. Fiona thank you for hanging in there to try and make this work! We appreciate! It may very well be that this portfolio will also be linked to the SASHT's need to appoint a Review Editor for the *Yesterday&Today*. This Editor will have its own book review team and a list of criteria which they will follow to review publications and to write reviews. These criteria, developed by the Book Review Editor, will be approved after the SASHT Executive Members were consulted.

**SHORTCOMINGS FOR THE NEW YEAR TO BE ADDRESSED, Sept 2010 – Sept 2011**

I guess that shortcomings are part and parcel of all that run's something! The SASHT's basket of shortcomings to be addressed is as follow:

- \* Five executive positions need to be filled. Needs exist for portfolios in Marketing; Regional Coordinator; conference planning and a workshops coordinator);
- \* A communication with members not having e-mail facilities. It has become costly to send out all info via snail mail. We try doing so when sending out the *Yesterday&Today* but it sometimes is not possible;
- \* We should think of raising the membership fee because postage fee has become an expensive item that nearly absorbs all the subscription fee per member;
- \* SASHT letter heads for each portfolio coordinator should be developed;

- \* The SASHT Constitution should be seriously revised to fit within the current doings and requirements of the SASHT.

### **ACTIVITIES FOR Sept 2010 – Sept 2011**

A few very important activities will require attention soon, namely:

- \* Developing the 2010 *Yesterday&Today* October edition and works towards accreditation;
- \* Developing explicit portfolio assignments for all SASHT portfolios during a special gathering by all the newly appointed Executive members and to add them to the (by then revised) SASHT Constitution;
- \* To support Unisa's Department of History (with Ms Henriette Lubbe as the SASHT's host coordinator) in organising the 16<sup>th</sup> conference in the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the SASHT's existence. Coincidentally the SASHT was founded at Unisa in 1986 so it just seems appropriate to have them as host again for the 2011 conference, where it all started!;
- \* To contribute with comments on the draft History Curriculum (Caps) on behalf of the SASHT. All members are invited to send forth their comments to Patrick McMahon and Paul Haupt who will coordinate the process to the eventual insight and satisfaction of the SASHT Executive before/by the deadline 15 October 2010.

### **GENERAL**

During the SASHT Braai dinner at the 2010 conference we also raised a glass to two special occasions. Firstly a word of appreciation was extended to Professor Johan Bergh of the South African Historical Association and his Executive for donating a substantial amount to make the SASHT Braai possible to SASHT members. The SAHA's history features a decades-long passion for educators of History and the activities of the SASHT. It is hoped that this association of interest will continue in future because it also unites history educators from all levels. By having a Braai as dinner we also, very appropriately, acknowledged the Braai4Heritage on Heritage Day of which Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, also known as "the Arch" is the "patron". Secondly we also celebrated this occasion with a long standing member of our executive who, since the founding of the Society, has served as member and then as executive committee since the nineties, namely Jimmy Verner. His impressive CV served as motivation to the SAHA to apply for a Certificate of outstanding service in promoting History as subject within the SASHT.

On this positive note then I want to thank each and all in the SASHT and the *Yesterday&Today* editorial for their contributions, their support and their involvement to serve and to listen to each other. Without any cooperation we can't take progressive strides towards strengthening ourselves in our profession. Do your bit and the rest will spontaneously follow.