

## Annual Report of National Inland and Offshore Committee

### 2015

The past year has been loaded with many challenges, particularly with regard to the global workings of SAS, my previous and present involvement has been mainly focussed on Vessel Survey and Crew safety issues, as chairman this has extended much further. National council have been very supportive in this regard.

I wish to thank Jannie for all the support he has given me during the year with guidance and help with the ongoing projects, he indicated that he wishes to complete the ones he started, I am grateful of that. Also Aruna, Leila and Wendy for their dedication and hard work under sometimes trying conditions. Debbie who recently joined SAS one day per week has helped to lighten Aruna's work load. This year has been extremely busy handling many issues ranging from admin, dealing with the SAMSA Centre For Boating, SAMSA per se, and building a sound working relationship with all the P O's from all regions. The result of this has been that on many occasions they have approached SAS for guidance on certain issues, a great step forward. Following is a brief outline of the most important issues ongoing and achieved during the year.

#### **Centre For Boating**

For the last year the centre for boating has not been entirely functional, this has been very frustrating for the entire boating industry. One of the burning issues has been the moratorium on selection of Safety Officers/Surveyors and Examiners country wide, Kzn has been most affected. To alleviate the problem due to attrition, I approached the Cape Town office and Nigel Campbell, Gustav Louw, and Allan Britz and Debbie James who held all the surveyor courses two years prior, they agreed I hold a course to ease the situation, six candidates were identified, interviewed, attended and wrote the evaluation, results will be available shortly. There are NO planned courses for the foreseeable future by SAMSA !

**OUR PROBLEM :** After the end of July I will be requesting a meeting with the head of Centre For Boating to have the moratorium lifted if only for SAS so we can conduct our business as before, we ARE mandated as an Appointed Authorized Agency to select, train and appoint Safety Officers and Examiners as required. The moratorium was imposed due to unscrupulous Agencies, SAS was Not one of them !

#### **Computer Software Upgrade**

It was agreed at council meeting at Henley Midmar for improvements to our current software to improve our efficiency and issuing of certificates to our members, Jannie has worked tirelessly on the specification surrounding this, trials are currently underway, C of C's will still have to be collected or couriered ( a Samsa requirement), but C of F's will be electronically delivered, this will alleviate the frustration we have experienced as SAS and our members due to seriously erratic postal service, as will reminders etc. There are several other improvements also being implemented, eg, member and vessel Photo capturing amongst others. These improvements I have no doubt will save admin time. Many of the delays and complaints for CoF's have been squarely in the court of ICASA, we may not issue until a valid paid up licence is on board, for registration to go foreign the licence is a mandatory

requirement. To avoid delays most of the small boat fraternity were accepting proof of payment only to avoid delays. Recent filtered down information indicates some great improvements in the pipeline from ICASA, we are holding our breath!

## **Authorizes Agency Needs Analysis**

In September 2014, Centre for Boating requested a needs analysis, SAS were the only agency to respond comprehensively to this request, we have followed up on this issue, however has become stagnated due to reasons already mentioned above. Jannie and I have had several meetings with SAMSA during the year to get some response. Some of the issues are as follows:

- VHF Short Range Certificate development.
- Career Path for young SAS yacht masters to progress commercially to larger Category vessels.
- Training of additional Safety Officers and Examiners.
- Power Boat CoC's.
- Issues regarding foreign going Pleasure vessels.
- Safety inspection and check sheet issues, now incorporating EPIRB testing and registration certificates.
- Float free EPIRBS.
- Lifejackets and harnesses
- Hull inspection for pleasure vessels. (not fully finalized yet), new MN forthcoming.
- NON punitive incident investigations.

Many other smaller projects are currently under way. The above issues have lengthy explanations too long for this report.

## **Port Clearance and Customs**

SAS needs to address this issue as soon as possible at a much higher level, to sail a vessel from Durban or Richards Bay to another port in the South African territorial zone, customs and immigration and Sars has to be cleared, the reasons given for this are by en large superfluous for the following reasons, for many decades a vessel arriving from a foreign port would be directed to the International Jetty, C and Immigration is cleared then directed to a local mooring. The same occurs leaving SA. This procedure is very clear in the Dept. of Home Affairs brief of which I have a copy. Their new argument is that it is a "PORT OF ENTRY", agreed, but what of the many day sails each day, and the schools undertaking night sails as well as trawlers out for a day or two, none of which require to clear customs. At the Vasco summit meeting with the various authorities I posed the question to the Immigration chief regarding Passports, she was taken aback and said a SA id would suffice, what then is the point of immigration? They could not furnish a sound argument for this rule.

I do agree with the following :

- Filing of a flight plan for any passage. (presently no follow up even when done).
- Foreign entry and exit procedure as done in the past.
- Clearing with appropriate marina to ensure no outstanding fees.
- Any other port fees/taxes outstanding.

The procedure they have imposed in KZN does not occur at any other port in SA, and the result of this unnecessary procedure is having a significant effect on SA yachtsmen often abandoning plans to do coastal voyages because of this implementation, the last ARC fleet to pass through complained bitterly that Durban and R/Bay force this requirement to the extent some indicated they would avoid KZN next time, these issues have an economical impact on the clubs and region. Another problem is the 3 hr before departure requirement and none on weekends, a huge impact on weather planning and controlled coastal events. (if I drive from the quayside in Durban (port of entry) must I clear customs and immigration to drive to Port Elizabeth ?).

## **Regulations and SAS**

I will be attempting a national information program with respect to the NSVR's, unfortunately many boat owners tend to bash SAS (and SAMSA) w.r.t. these regulations, they have always been there however in the form of CASA requirements, which no one complained about ! The regulations as they stand were almost a carbon copy of the CASA guidelines, these regulations are subject to Audit by SAMSA, in reality we are self regulating as in the past and much of the time SAS are left alone, we still however have to comply. Many members want the Reg's to simply be thrown out, this is not going to happen, even a small amendment becomes a major issue !

## **Finances**

Jannie has had his finger on the pulse here during my transition, so I am still getting to grips with this aspect. It does appear that SAS Inland/Offshore balance sheet was once again healthy at the end of the financial year, this did enable us to improve our software systems, we will still strive at Inland and Offshore to save costs where we can.

## **Conclusion**

During the next year there will be more challenges w.r.t. refining our procedures even further, several proposals and visions have been put forward by Peter Hall, we are awaiting this development. SAS has been included in the ongoing enquiry into the TUI incident, although it is a commercial venture our input has been requested with Jannie working closely with Captain Allan Britz from SAMSA.

Gavin van der Meulen

National Chairman Inland and Offshore



