

3 December 2017

## 2017 AGM – FRANKLIN PLAYERS COMMUNITY THEATRE CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Welcome to our members and my fellow committee members.

2017 has been a very busy and productive year for Franklin Players and the committee, in no small part due to the preceding 2016 committee’s tireless work and dedication under the leadership of our previous chairperson Els de Bundel.

The hand over from Els to myself as incoming Chair was flawless, resulting in a smooth transition to the new incoming committee, with a solid foundation to take the work of the committee forward in 2017.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank Els for her tremendous contribution and unwavering commitment to Franklin Players as Chairperson and previous committee member of Franklin Players.

In 2017 the committee hit the road running with nine committee members. We had two resignations during the year due to personal commitments. Adam Brand whose role was to assist with Technical resigned in the first quarter of the year, followed by Ralph Roos in the second quarter who was responsible for our Social Media presence. These roles were taken over by myself and Lise Wessels respectively.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank both Adam and Ralph for their commitment and dedication to the Franklin Committee and look forward to still welcoming them to future shows.

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)

## REPORT BACK ON 2017 PRODUCTIONS

### One Act Play Festival 2017

Our first production of the year was our very popular One Act Play Festival which ran over the weekends of 31 March / 1 April and 7 April / 8 April.

Entries of productions this year were slower than previous years, and prior to auditions we had only 5 productions that had entered (2 from Protea Stage Productions, 1 from EADS and 2 from Franklin Players).

In order to add some more flesh to the festival the committee decided to make use of two older one act play productions which had previously been staged many years back. Thus a festival with 7 productions was possible, and our audiences were treated to 3 full nights of entertainment with a vast variety of productions.

This year's festival was adjudicated by three entirely independent adjudicators, namely Cati Muller, Kathleen Andersen and Johnathan Taylor.

The final evening saw the top 2 productions "No Year's Eve" and "For the Love of Cheesecake" battle it out on stage for the final, with "For the Love of Cheesecake" taking top accolades on the evening.

20 awards, 7 merit certificates and 8 merit certificates for acting were awarded at the finals.

Once again, myself and the committee would like to thank all the participants and fellow amateur drama societies as well as the many people in the background who assisted in creating yet another successful One Act Play Festival.

The festival made a total profit of R8,779.73 (2016 – R2,197.25) with a donation being raised for our 2017 charity – Barking Mad / Dogtown SA – of R1,673.50

It should be noted that while we had a more significant profit than 2016, many of the expenses for the 2017 One Act Play Festival we covered by way of donations, many of which were contributed by Committee members). Total donations amounted to approximately R3,500.

Some concerns have of late come to my attention with regards to the adjudication of the One Act Play Festival and I would like to clarify.

With entrants to the festival, the rules stipulate that any production which has won best production in the 2 years preceding the current Fest, this production may not be entered for the current fest.

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)

Hence both “LA” (more than 7 years ago) and “For the Love of Cheesecake” (6 years ago) were eligible to enter the fest and this was discussed and confirmed at committee level.

The adjudication of the fest is ENTIRELY independent and I as chairman or any other committee member have absolutely no influence over the results or opinions of the adjudicators. I as chairperson merely enter the scoring given to me by the adjudicators in a spreadsheet and then give that overall information back to the adjudicators, who then make their final decisions.

### **Mid-Year 2017 – The Rat Trap**

This show ran for the weekends of 28/29 July and 4/5 August 2017.

The selected play for the mid-year show was “The Rat Trap” by Claire Demmer.

As with all productions we put a call out for any budding actors to join for the auditions, and this year extended that invitation to any experienced directors to take on the immense task, as we had not had any interest from any Franklin members.

We did receive external interest, and the task was eagerly taken on by Riandi Malan, a new member to Franklin Players, and she was assisted by Eugene Malan as co-Director.

The team of Riandi and Eugene worked tirelessly on this production, and the results were definitely there to be seen when the show opened on 28 July.

This show was by no means an easy feat, the acting requirements as well as set requirements were a bit extreme compared to what we have taken on in the past, however the directorial team took on the task and definitely exceeded expectations.

With the huge demand of a wrap-around set, with a stable and structurally sound upper level, the committee undertook to get rid of all the old timber, which had been used for many MANY years and had reached its end, and we committed to the purchase of new structural timber beams and set fronts. This was absorbed as a production expense, resulting in an overspend of the budget by R2616,05. However, the set timber was an investment and will be used for many shows going forward.

A huge word of thanks needs to be extended to the committee for taking on this task, and a special thank you to Sam’s husband Martin Keller who assisted myself over three weekends for the construction of the set, and his knowledge of structural rigidity and weight discernment were indispensable. We were truly proud of the end product.

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)

Once again, a significant portion of production expenses was funded by way of donations, this amounted to approximately R5,000.00

The show made a total profit of R2,360.95 (2016 – R6,663.55) despite the over run on budget, with donations to our charity of R1,520.00

### **Year-End Panto 2017 – Peter Goes to Wonderland**

The Franklin Panto has for years been a firm favourite of our patrons, and the standard of which over a number of years has been developed to expectations higher than we could have expected by our previous Chairperson, Els, who was always ready and willing to dive into the huge project that is the Pantomime.

This year's Panto "Peter Goes to Wonderland" was written and directed by our very talented Jessica Urbani, whom we have become accustomed to seeing on stage, not so much off stage. Jessica acknowledged the immensity of the task from the beginning and put a production team together to assist. This team came in the form of Mario van Basten as co-Director, Chanel Venter as Musical Director and Marenke Snyman as Choreographer and Dance Coach. This was a first in my time at Franklin to have had such a large production team.

For those who saw the Panto I am sure you can agree that the results spoke for themselves. The cast of 18 and production team of 7 put on a rip-roaring pantomime which was so well supported that we had 3 out of the 4 nights SOLD OUT! And a very well supported Saturday matinee show as well.

One of the show's requirements was quite a demanding Technical Rider with no less than 9 wireless Countryman mics, a cost which we could not absorb into the show's budget. To this end we advised the production team that they would need to raise funds for this expense. Within two weeks a quiz fundraiser was organised and very well supported, and we made R6,635 towards the expense of R8,379. The balance was funded by way of production budget.

The net profit for the Panto was R19,531.15 (2016 – R23,444.05) with a donation to our charity of R2,600.00

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)

2017 marked a year of the execution of a number of priorities and projects which have been formulated over a number of years, through many preceding committees, and while the 2017 committee had the privilege of executing those plans, we cannot take the full credit for them.

A few of the projects – which I will drill down into individual detail later – worth mentioning are as follows:

**1. The conceptualisation and implementation of our new logo and Corporate Identity**

This was a project that was identified by the 2016 committee. As one of the committee's first projects we undertook a rebrand of our corporate identity, something that many would understand is a costly exercise. We tapped into our talent pool within the committee and the project was spearheaded by our Designer, Ayrika Hunter. Many options were provided, and finally the current logo was adopted by the committee in the first quarter of 2017. The cost of this process would normally have been in excess of R5,000.00, however due to the services given to us by Ayrika we are pleased to note that we were not charged for the design at all. I would once again like to make special mention to thank Ayrika for the many design hours that went into this process.

**2. The relaunch and formalisation of our monthly newsletter**

Another project identified towards the end of 2016. With the launch of our new logo, we felt the next logical step was to rejuvenate and re-inspire our monthly newsletter. This project was taken on by our committee member responsible for PR, Traci Scerri, with the wordsmithing of our current Vice Chair, Sam Keller. Once again countless hours of work went into the new template, and the content is always beautifully written and informative. Once again it is to be noted that a few thousand rands were once again saved due to the talents of these ladies being made available to us.

**3. Active social media presence on all platforms – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**

The portfolio of Social Media was previously held by Ralph Roos, who was responsible for the creation of our social media presence. When Ralph resigned the portfolio was moved to Lise Wessels who hit the road running and continued with a consistent and relevant presence on all media platforms, all of which have been creating awareness of our society and the happenings thereof. Also more importantly keeping us relevant in the current era of social media and technology.

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)

**4. The thorough clean-up of understage and the adjacent storage garage**

This is a project which has been on the agenda of committee meetings for a very long time and which for many years we have done on a small scale, by way of repacking and cleaning. However, last year it was decided that years and years of old timber, broken props and general off-cuts needed to be cleaned out.

This project has always been difficult as members are never keen to give up time for the not-so-fun projects. Nonetheless we persevered and it became a committee project, and we hired some additional labour to assist. The entire understage was brought up, sorted, the floors swept for the first time in many years, all the old broken and useless timber removed and everything repacked. All in all, we got rid of an 8-ton truck of rubble.

The project was completed prior to the Mid-Year production, with Ashley and myself coming and clearing out the garage of all the old and rotten set timber, and once again two bakkie loads were disposed of.

**5. The adoption for the first time by a committee of a Mission and Vision statement, further defining our mandate for Franklin Players**

At the close of 2016, our outgoing Chairperson left us with a beautifully written Mission and Vision Statement, which the committee adopted. This Vision and Mission Statement will be uploaded to our website in early 2018.

**6. Formulation of roles and responsibilities within the Committee and Franklin**

A project that was started in 2016, and is still ongoing within the committee. It is our aim to create job descriptions with roles and responsibilities of each committee member, that we can be held accountable to. Amidst all the other work on a monthly basis, we are still working on this project and hope that 2018 can see the adoption by the incoming committee of these roles and responsibilities.

**7. The updating of our Video library of previous shows**

In mid-2016 the committee decided to update our library of previous shows. This was a significant expense to have old shows mastered and burnt to disc and was something that had previously moved from person to person within the committee. With people resigning and moving on, many of the shows were lost. We are now actively working to archive all shows taped and keeping multiple copies for our records.

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)

**8. Further development of relationships with our Sister Amdram societies**

In 2016 the committee noted the necessity of working on building relationships with sister Amdram societies, and strengthening these relationships. This started very well in 2016, and I am pleased to report has gone from strength to strength in 2017. Franklin took part in the EADS showcase held on 9/10 June with a one act play written specifically for this showcase by Ashley Nader. The show was very well received by the audience, and the acting of a very high calibre. Franklin also took part in the RLT May-Rioty show with the winning production of the One Act Play Fest, a tradition which was started in 2016 and we hope to continue into the future. Furthermore, both Protea Stage Productions from Benoni and EADS from Edenvale took part in our One Act Play Festival with 2 and 1 productions respectively. It has also become commonplace for these societies to support our productions during the year, and we as a committee also make every effort to get to their shows and show our support.

**9. Membership to SANCTA (South African Community Theatre Association)**

For a number of years, the committee has wanted to become a member of SANCTA once again, and I am pleased to say that this year we formalised this. Franklin Players was a founding member of Sancta back in 1982, and we look forward to rebuilding the relationship and making a meaningful contribution to community theatre through our membership to SANCTA.

**10. Adjudication by SANCTA for their full length play festival**

This year the committee undertook to enter our mid-year show “The Rat Trap” into the SANCTA full length play festival. Three Sancta adjudicators joined us on the final night of the show to adjudicate the play. We received very positive feedback and await eagerly the conclusion of the Fest by SANCTA who will then notify us of any winners.

**11. Obtaining a licence from SAMRO (South African Music Rights Organisation) to play copyrighted music in public**

Although a community theatre, Franklin is still liable to have a SAMRO license so as to ensure we are compliant with paying our fees due for the use of all copyrighted music. This has been a point on many agendas since my involvement in Franklin. It was no easy task to navigate and was taken on by our Vice Chair, Sam Keller. After countless telephone calls and folders of emails, Sam was successful in obtaining the correct information and forms, and we have formalised and paid our membership fees. These fees are contingent on us submitting set lists of all songs, and the duration thereof, used during productions and as background music during intervals.

## **12. Obtaining JOC (Joint Operations Committee) compliance from City of Johannesburg**

Late in October 2017 we were advised by the Rec centre that we need to become JOC compliant. JOC stands for the Joint Operations Committee. Every municipality has a JOC committee and this committee is made up of a representative of every municipal department, such as emergency services, sanitation, water, metro police and so on.

JOC is a requirement of the 2010 Sports and Recreation Act and the city's municipal by-laws, which requires all events to make a JOC application to be able receive approval for the running of their event. This act has started being enforced a lot more rigidly and thus we needed to become compliant.

I took on this mammoth task with very little time, as we literally did our presentation on the Thursday before the opening night of the Panto. The file, which is available for review by any members interested, consists of no less than 60 odd pages of documents, letters, notifications, approved floor plans, permission letters, approvals and more. While a JOC presentation is not charged for, there are many elements for the presentation which do have a significant financial implication to us.

- Each floor plan approval is R300.00
- Each inspection by EMS prior to the event is R1,486.00 per event
- Public Liability cover (which Franklin has taken out to the value of R1,500,000.00) annual premium of R5,500.00
- Medical emergency personnel on site for all shows (R6,000.00 per production)

Many of these costs cannot be avoided, however we have negated a few in the following way:

- I am in negotiations with EMS to charge us an annual fee of R1,500.00 as our JOC application was done for ALL shows till the 2018 Panto – this is ongoing and will be reported once concluded.
- We had no choice but to comply with Public Liability cover and have taken out cover through a division of Hollard that covers event liability insurance. We have negotiated a monthly premium of R550.00 for cover of R1,5 million – the minimum required by JOC.
- Medical Emergency personnel – we approached St Johns Ambulance and were quoted R6,000.00 per show, an amount which we cannot at all afford. I then contacted ER24 who have agreed to support our events with a non-dedicated ambulance crew who will be on site, however not dedicated to our events. They have agreed to do this at no charge to us currently.

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)

Finally, the relationship with our landlord, being the Roosevelt Park Rec Centre, has definitely gone from strength to strength primarily due to the numerous meetings we have had regarding the JOC requirements, and they have been really helpful in terms of their assistance with the requirements, contact numbers of ward councillors and JOC committee.

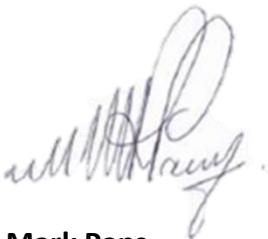
While this has not been confirmed and still awaits City of Johannesburg Council ratification, the Rec Centre has put forward a proposed monthly rental adjustment to assist us with recouping some of the costs associated with JOC. Our current monthly rent is R1,085.00 which should have increased to R1,143.00. Taking into account our costs, the Rec Centre has proposed a monthly rental of R561.00 which, if ratified by council, will enable us to recoup R6,984.00 annually.

In conclusion, I think it is evident from my report that a lot of work has gone into Franklin Players in 2017 by a very committed and dedicated committee. I would like to thank our current committee members for their countless hours, financial contributions and hard work to achieving so many of our goals in 2017.

I would also like to note that the current committee has worked tirelessly to ensure that we leave Franklin in a strong financial position going into 2018, which you will see in the financial report has been more than achieved. The 2017 committee has worked cohesively together with the sole purpose of furthering the goals and aspirations of Franklin Players. It has been a privilege to lead you, and note that a good leader can only lead a willing collective, and willing you have all been.

The position of committee member requires a person who is willing to put in huge amounts of effort for very little to no recognition and no financial remuneration. We do it for the love of theatre and the fulfilment it brings to creating an environment that enables our creative spirits to bring joy to audiences on stage.

To the incoming committee, I wish you the best of luck for 2018 and look forward to another successful year of The Franklin Players and furthering our 55 year legacy in the Community Theatre space.



**Mark Paps**  
**CHAIRMAN**  
**THE FRANKLIN PLAYERS COMMUNITY THEATRE**

---

Committee:

Mark Paps (Chairman), Samantha Keller (Vice Chair), Ashley Nader (Treasurer), Wendy Brehm (Secretary),  
Traci Scerri (Comms & PR), Ayrika Hunter (Design), Lise Wessels (Social Media)