

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We continue to live in extraordinary times. Every day I witness people with great courage and resilience, although some now have sense-of-humour failure and some have wavering faith, but mostly I meet people who just grit their teeth and move forward, knowing that things will get better. They will!

On the last day of our past financial year (31 March 2021) I wrote to MHA's senior staff, and I want to share with you what I said to them, in the hope that it will leave you with a sense of positivity and gratitude, and encouragement to embrace the 'new tomorrow' when we all have been vaccinated, and the craziness of the past year and more will be consigned to grim history.

"Greetings, colleagues.

What a year this has been!!!! As we close off our financial year this afternoon, I have been reflecting on just how much has been achieved by the MHA team and residents during the past twelve months, in the most trying of conditions and circumstances.

Some of the thoughts I have had, and want to share with you, are the following:

- We're still in business!!! The direct and indirect impact of Covid has hammered MHA financially, with unbudgeted expenses incurred in the fight against the pandemic, and our inability to sell Life Rights for a long period, leaving cottages and apartments vacant. We will fill the large hole made in our Reserves and get the business back on track in the coming financial year, and we must be grateful that, pre-Covid, MHA was in a very healthy financial position, enabling us to weather the current storm
- While we recorded Covid infections of about 10% of total headcount (just over 60, roughly split 50/50 between residents and staff), we only recorded four deaths, all residents. As tragic as those losses were, all four were around 90 years of age, and two were very unwell pre-Covid. God's protecting hand was ever-present in and around MHA, every day
- Two weeks before Government shut down the country in late March 2020, MHA had already established its CovidCom; plans were put in place, our own facilities went into Lockdown a week before the country did that, hygiene and infection control policies and procedures had been established, documented and implemented, and we effectively had a 'head start' in going to war. I remain convinced that the disciplined way in which we have waged the Covid war over this past year has saved many, many lives
- The courage and discipline displayed by our staff has been a wonder to behold. Our CEO and Nursing Services Manager provided strong and decisive leadership. Our frontline staff came to work each and every day or night, facing an unknown range of risks while at the same time leaving vulnerable loved ones at home, and they dedicated themselves to providing nursing and caring services to our elderly residents. All other staff across MHA played a critically important role too, often in trying circumstances. While it was sad and difficult to have to retrench the majority of our Housekeeping staff, MHA was able to continue employing and remunerating our staff complement, and all of them applied themselves with dedication. We have so much to be grateful for in this regard. Our staff are truly HEROES, one and all
- ✓ Likewise, our residents displayed courage and discipline, especially during the 'hard lockdown' periods. Our Managers were suddenly presented with many new challenges for which there was no warning or preparation, and yet our Villages and other facilities continued to operate efficiently, and community life continued as best it could. Residents in our Bedsitters and Frail Cares have been locked in for over twelve months now; they have been stoic and uncomplaining, and they each deserve a medal!
- The wider MHA family has also played a crucial role. Family and friends of residents have had to make painful sacrifices and adjustments, and almost without exception they have seen the bigger picture, and co-operated. Our service providers and various advisors have also assisted us in coping with extraordinary times and challenges.

On behalf of the Board, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your outstanding service during the past year. Please let those staff under your care know how much this means to everyone within the MHA family. Please stay safe. The war is not yet over".

Kind regards, Malcolm Stewart Board Chairman

SALUTE THOSE WHO SERVE

One of the ways in which our MHA residents give back to the community in which they live is to serve on their Liaison Committee. The Committees perform an important function. Some are more active and involved than others (the dynamics change from time to time) but making oneself eligible for election to serve on a Liaison Committee for a period is definitely worthwhile, and valuable.

Via meetings and correspondence in 2014, the following emerged as being central to Liaison Committees, and underpins the current basis of how and why they exist and operate:

- ✓ Liaison Committee members are not the gatherers of snags and operational issues which are tabled at meetings; those should be reported by residents to the Manager as and when they become evident
- ✓ Committee members get actively involved by being a second layer of help to their Manager, and in being a valuable link between residents and Management
- Members should be prepared to stand in for their Manager when he/she is off duty or unavailable, especially in overseeing a medical emergency or significant damage to assets
- ✓ Each Member should represent "another pair of ears and eyes" in identifying potential problems/issues, reporting those or taking proactive action, and being "another pair of hands"; in effect, almost acting as an Assistant Manager at times (Managers cannot and must not be on duty 24/7/365).

Serving on a Liaison Committee should not be viewed as "a thankless task"; assisting your Manager in identifying, eliminating or treating any issues which could impact on the safety, security, health, contentment or community life of residents deserves the grateful thanks of all residents. In this edition of the MHA Newsletter we acknowledge the selfless service of all current and past Liaison Committee members. Our Managers and our residents have so much to be grateful for.



We also acknowledge the contribution made by Sheila van der Merwe. She moved to Cassia Gardens in October 2008, and was elected onto their Liaison Committee in 2009. She served uninterrupted until 2018 when she 'retired', but agreed to remain available as the Committee's scribe. Sheila, who is a down to earth, practical and popular personality, has just moved to Bob Zeiss Bedsitters.

We thank her for her service, and wish her many happy years in her new home.

While we are in 'salute' mode, we must also salute the Editors of our Village Newsletters, and acknowledge the wonderful work that they do, month after month. However, a deserving '21 gun salute' rings out for Ron Cleland, our recently retired editor of the MHA



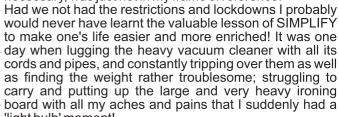
Newsletter. Ron oversaw and edited MHAOTB publications 1 to 27, over an uninterrupted seven year stretch.

Thank you, Ron, for sharing your skills and passion with all the MHAOTB readers.

A CHANCE TO SIMPLIFY

(Moira Boshoff of Cassia Gardens shares these useful ideas about simplifying ones' life, and at the same time enriching the lives of others)

Reflecting on the year that has passed, and the immense changes that took place in our lives in order for us to remain safe, I became aware of some of the good that has come from these strange and difficult times. I don't know about you but I was brought up to be frugal and only spend money on necessities; so to think of replacing anycommodity that hadn't worn out or blown up, or that may not be absolutely necessary, was just not in my frame of reference!



'light bulb' moment!

What on earth am I trying to achieve? My family all have the latest gadgets and appliances that make their lives easier so why am I struggling at my age, when during this time I'm saving money on petrol and meals out etc because we are in lockdown!!! So off I went to Rafi's and Gelmar first thing the next morning and bought myself a light as a feather ironing board and a very light small vacuum cleaner with a strong motor. What a difference this has made to my life and what a relief.....AND the best news of all was finding a very needy home for my old ones (incidentally I had had both for over 20 years!!!) so I didn't have to struggle with guilt of being 'frivolous'!

What followed was another clearing out of stuff that I 'may' need one day, donating it to the same person who was thrilled and delighted to receive more items that they would use on a daily basis, while I was storing them in my already overcrowded garage despite not having used them for years, 'in case one day I may need them'!!

Lesson learnt was that I don't have to struggle because of my own limited inhibitions but can acknowledge that sometimes it's time to make simple easy changes to make my life easier and more comfortable, especially as I get older, and at the same time helping another to have something that they need right now and which gives me such joy.

And it was about the same time that by pure chance I was offered an Airfryer by a family friend. I knew a few people who owned one and spoke highly of them so I decided to give it a go with the knowledge that if it didn't work for me I

knew I would be able to find it a good home.
Living alone I soon found that this was indeed a very useful item to have in the kitchen. I could 'fry' various foodstuffs in a much healthier way, cleaning was incredibly easy and I discovered more and more ways to utilise it, like reheating, making potato chips, roasting baby potatoes with herbs, cooking pastries etc. Cooking in a small airfryer in comparison to heating up a large oven or getting grease spattered on the top of a stove was just the answer.

And so 'they' say that we are never too old to learn and that has certainly been my experience, especially to make changes to simplify and enhance my life.

I read recently that the harder we resist change the more we short-change ourselves, and this lesson I will call to mind whenever I doubt my inner voice urging me to make my life easier because of messages that I still carry with me from my childhood!



THE GIFT OF GIVING

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

During the 39 years of its existence MHA has been the recipient of wonderful, generous gifts, and this still happens. Some have been huge, and some quite modest, but every Rand or item was given with love, and received in the same way. A Chinese proverb also rings true: "If you always give you will always have".

Two recent gifts will be enjoyed by so many.

Three adult children whose parents passed away in Maranatha Frail Care in recent times donated a sum of money to be used to replace lounge curtains in MFC, and a monetary gift to the staff who had looked after the couple with great love and kindness. As the photos show, Matron Nelmari Windell and carer Lelethu Benya had 'wedding gown' fun with the old curtains, and two MFC carers, Brenda Jack and Nomhle Mtubu, showed off the lovely new curtains.







Our Chairman's neighbour, a retired librarian and obviously a lover of books, generously donated 50 once-read novels to MHA, and these have found their way into our Village libraries, where they will give great joy to our scores of bookworms.

PS: the books belonged to her, not to the library she worked for!!















OUR CORONAVIRUS PHOTO ALBUM (Volume 1!)

It is just not possible to capture the trials and tribulations, the tales and the triumphs of the past year in a few simple photographs. As was the case in other world-shaking events in our lifetimes, it will take historians and others a long, long time to adequately capture the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of almost 8 billion people. What we can do, however, is to create a collage of photographs of MHA life during the past year. When Lockdown regulations permitted, gardens still gave joy, there were trips to the beachfront for an ice cream, there was a time to braai, tea parties to enjoy, sunrises and sunsets and the occasional rainbow were there to admire and to be grateful for, and even time to refurbish a memorial bench (lest we forget). There will be more photos to share, and stories to tell, before the war is over. We are a resilient bunch, so let's celebrate the 'little big things' that have helped us get through the pandemic, thus far. Let us also bow our heads in gratitude for the blessings we receive from living in a caring community.

