MONTHLY COMPETITION

Set Subject for Month: Humour
External Judge: Lynette Taljaard
Internal Judges: Prints by Members Present

First Placed Image: Stellenbosch Sunset
Author: Stephen Roodt
Digital, Open, 28 Points

Second Placed Image: Ladies Night
Author: Gavin Whiteford
Digital, Open, 28 Points

Third Placed Image: If you sit here you must be a dick
Author: Steve Trimby
Digital, Set Subject, 28 Points

FROM THE CHAIR

Most of us spent a fair amount of time worrying about the weather – what a storm we experienced. Several members living in Somerset West and Stellenbosch bore the brunt of the onslaught and now need home and garden repairs … not much time for outdoor photography!

But Tuesday 9th April saw us back to normal in our little church hall, with a nice group of members. We were happy to welcome five new members!

Our Set Subject was 'Humour', and it was great to have a good laugh at images where the photographer was in the right place at the right time.

Next month's Set Subject is ICM – quite a fashionable subject these days – and one that needs experimentation. Steve Trimby kindly offered an off the cuff explanation of how to go about things – so we are hoping for some good efforts next month! Please give it a shot, everyone!

Till next time,

Best regards,

Nettie

Important Announcements

Congratulations to Issi on achieving her JAP accreditation.

For those not in the know, JAP is the PSSA Judges Accreditation Program. This is a series of lectures on the judging of photographic images, culminating in an examination. The program is carried out every year. The next course starts 6 July, 2024 - apply by 30 April.

Please remember to attend the next HPS Black and White Meeting. All are welcome.

Attendees are invited to submit their monochrome entries into Photo Vault - Set Subject (2 x Humour + 2 x ICM) and Open (4 x). Alternatively, these may be substituted by prints, hand delivered on the night.

Date: Tuesday 7th May, 2024.

Time: 19h00.

Venue: Issi's House.

Address: 6 Du Toit Street, The Palms, Strand.

Message From Roger Lee (Past HPS President)

Hi Nettie

We are well although would prefer to be in Gordon's Bay – being close to grand-kids does make a difference however!

Am I right that you are still chairperson? If so – wow! I miss Helderberg, although Randburg is full of good people – I am no longer on their committee but still enjoy it – age etc!

Please say Hi to anyone who might remember me - particularly Irmel and Antenie.
In a rush of blood to the head I actually agreed to give a talk at the PSSA congress in October! On Smartphone Photography. Are you or anyone from Helderberg planning to attend? Probably could do with some moral support!!

Just for fun here is a pic from Barcelona – la Sagrada Familia – just amazing! They have been building it since 1852 or so…

I was cruise representative on this visit and actually lost a passenger! It was her fault and she luckily made it back to the ship – quite stressful for a couple of hours!

The cruising business is still just ridiculous! We are off to Singapore on Tuesday (they kindly fly us there) and spend 28 days cruising back to Cape Town via all manner of islands and countries. Just amazing! I have to do just 8 talks and be a friendly, helpful photographer. We actually have trouble in believing that this really is little old us.

Take care and enjoy the wonderful Cape!

Cheers,

R2

FUTURE SET SUBJECTS

Month	Date	Meeting	Set Subjects	
May	Tue 07 May	B&W	Humour	ICM
May	Tue 14 May	Competition	ICM	
June	Tue 11 Jun	Competition	Street Photography	
July	Tue 02 Jul	B&W	Street Photography	Macro
July	Tue 09 Jul	Competition	Macro	
August	Tue 13 Aug	Competition	The Power of Perspective	
September	Tue 03 Sep	B&W	The Power of Perspective	Night Lights
September	Tue 10 Sep	Competition	Night Lights	
October	Tue 08 Oct	Competition	Windows	
November	Tue 05 Nov	B&W	Windows	Minimalism
November	Tue 12 Nov	Competition	Minimalism	
December	Tue 10 Dec	GALA Evening	Special Project Show	

Set Subject for June 2024 - Street Photography

Our HPS write-up for this set subject says: "This is a form of photography that captures scenes of life in urban settings. From bustling markets, to scenes on Beach Road, find new perspectives and observations for us."

Adobe's definition states: *"Street Photography is a form of storytelling that communicates the experience of everyday life and the vision of the artist via photos shot out in the world. Like photojournalism, nothing is staged, posed, or planned, and it doesn't rely on models or studio lights."*

Wikipedia goes somewhat further, stating that: *"Street photography (also sometimes called candid photography) is photography conducted for art or inquiry that features unmediated chance encounters and random incidents within public places, usually with the aim of capturing images at a decisive or poignant moment by careful framing and timing.*

Although there is a difference between street and candid photography, it is usually subtle with most street photography being candid in nature and some candid photography being classifiable as street photography.

Street photography does not necessitate the presence of a street or even the urban environment. Though people usually feature directly, street photography might be absent of people and can be of an object or environment where the image projects a decidedly human character in facsimile or aesthetic."

It seems to me that, often, our external judges do not seem to agree with my interpretations of the HPS set subjects. Also, the set subject under discussion here appears to be particularly prone to interpretation. As such, I have decided to provide a selection of interesting websites found by Google, and let each of you make up your own minds as to what is suitable.

Here are the suggested websites:

Photography Life: Complete Guide to Street Photography for Beginners. This is a fairly comprehensive discussion of the subject.

11 Street Photography Ideas to Spark Your Creativity. Contains a few different suggestions that may be helpful to you.

"Hot dog stand, North Moore Street, Manhattan (1936)." Photograph by Berenice Abbott.

PetaPixel - Street Photography: A Complete Guide. The image was borrowed from this reference, but I had to move it to the right to get the guy looking into the page!

The Best Street Photographers of All Time. You are bound to recognize some of these images.

The Ultimate Guide to Street Photography. This is something else from Digital Photography School.

AUDIO VISUALS

As part of the South African team judging the international 'Challenge 321 – Audio Visual Contest' one watches quite a variety of Audio Visuals, altogether 90 AVs this year. It is called judging, I rather would say, evaluating.

What are my criteria to do justice to other people's creative work?

There is a list of important technical points one should keep in mind, and some participants are using available audio as well as image technology in very creative ways with great results. Again and again it is mind blowing what can be done.

At the end, those AVs with a strong message and those touching me emotionally are the ones that stay with me. It takes me back many years at HPS when I first got to know about Audio Visuals – still slides and projectors - Nicole's message was and still is relevant: ***"If you touch your viewer emotionally, then you are on the right track."***

Irmel

Challenge 321 : Question on AI

Comment on AI by the organizer

A message was sent to the organizer of Challenge 321 asking for clarification as regards the use of AI for the submitted AVs. Here are excerpts from the messages:

To: Klaus Fritzsche <info321@Challenge321.org>
Re: Question on AI

Good Morning Klaus

I have just been asked a question:

Where does AI fit into this competition?
It was noted that one AV had all the images generated by the use of artificial intelligence?

Regards
Trish

REPLY

Dear Trish,

We have no rules regarding the usage of AI generated images.

I think, it depends mainly on the work as a whole, regardless of whether the images and/or sound were produced in-house or whether works by other artists were used.
One thing is clear: every third-party use should be named.

Creating photos with the help of AI needs also some knowledge and creativity, to get meaningful images. It's not "easy going".

So for me it is fully acceptable to create images by use of AI.
That's my personal point of view. Any judge may have another opinion. But there is no rule to prohibit AI images.

Hopefully I could help to clarify the topic.

I copy all hosts because the question might be of general interest.

best regards
Klaus

EDITOR'S COMMENT

A Brief Look at Using AI   *(N.B. Click on any image below to see an Enlarged version)*

Previously I have commented on the usage by Blake Rudis of Magnific AI. (See HPS Newsletter – January, 2024.) He used this programme to improve portions of images that had been patched by Photoshop's new generative fill tool, but which were then seen to be lacking in detail. Magnific modified the patch to look more real. I would have liked to try out this software, but it appears that there is no free trial. This, together with the fact that a Magnific license is fairly expensive in Rand terms, have kept me from having a look.

While researching Magnific, I came across a comment from a guy using Krea AI, which he says is better than Magnific, and is also free to try out. (The commentator paid for full versions of both softwares.) Having just finished editing two images from the Stellenbosch Airshow 2024, I wondered how Krea AI might work on those edits. So, I tried out Krea online (accepting that there are some limitations on the free version).

Image 1: Original RAW file exported as jpg
1024 x 683 sRGB

Krea AI has two modes; **Generate** (which uses text prompts to dream up an image), and **Enhance** (which attempts to improve an image that you provide). Here, I was particularly interested in looking at the **Enhance** mode. Below, my discussion of the investigation revolves mainly around my image of the Antonov AN-2, which I put up for judging at the April 2024 HPS Meeting (see Image 6 below).

Image 1 above is a copy of the raw file (1/1600 s at F6.3, ISO 400, focal length 240 - the maximum possible on my 24-240 mm zoom-lens). During the earlier edit, I had decided to remove the bright white cloud on the left, and add a bit to the right side of the image, both to suit the final composition. However, for the purposes of this Krea experiment, I have stuck with this original image background.
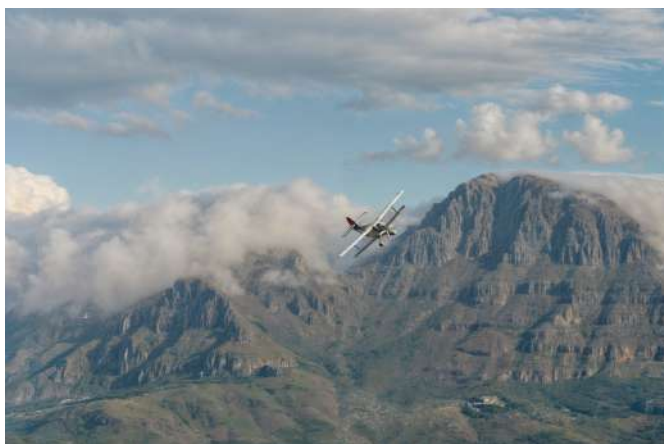

Image 2: Image 1 jpg put through Krea AI
(AI Strength 0.60, Resemblance 0.38,
Clarity 0.33)

Krea AI's edit of the image is shown in Image 2, (2048 x 1360 px). I Imported this into Photoshop, and upsized the image to 6000 x 4000 px to look at the details. The aircraft is a total mess, but Krea did a good job on the details of the mountain and sky, even after the large image size increase.

OK, so we might imagine taking the aircraft out of the image (which is what I did during my earlier edit in any case) and having Krea process just the landscape.

In my earlier edit, I had cut out a copy of the aircraft, pasted it into a new file, and increased the size by a factor of four.

This I then used to make the mask, add spin to the propeller, and do some cloning to clean up here and there. All of this work was still available in a psd file.

Image 3 here is a copy of my start image after the size increase.

This image was loaded into Krea and edited using the same settings that I used on the background.

Image 3: Airplane cut from Image 1 and increased 4 x (in both directions, W&H) in Photoshop

Image 4: Image 3 as enhanced by Krea AI without changing settings.

Image 4 is the result of Krea's work. There are a few minor errors, (I'm at a loss to explain the black ants in top left corner!) but all in all it's a pretty good effort. Little things like the light reflections on the tires give it an edge over my earlier edit.

However, it has the **big** advantage of giving more defined edges to the aircraft, which would greatly benefit the masking processes. In fact, I would prefer to have started my masking work with Image 4 rather than with Image 3!

One big editing problem that I had was with the engine cowl. I eventually solved this by using an image of the Antonov parked on the airfield to fix things. Krea did a pretty good job without that help!

The results of my earlier edit are shown in Image 5. This was my version of the masked Airplane after working on Image 3 in Photoshop, and pasting that result back into the sky, which had been patch repaired by using the PS content-aware fill tool.

Image 6 is my image as submitted to HPS. There was no Krea AI involved here – I only started looking at the Krea programme after I had submitted my monthly images into Photo Vault.

As regards the background, I prefer this version over the Krea edited version, because the mountain/cloud details in the latter tends to draw one's eye away from the aircraft. (I did prepare such an image for my own information.)

Image 5: This was my version of the masked Airplane after working on Image 3.
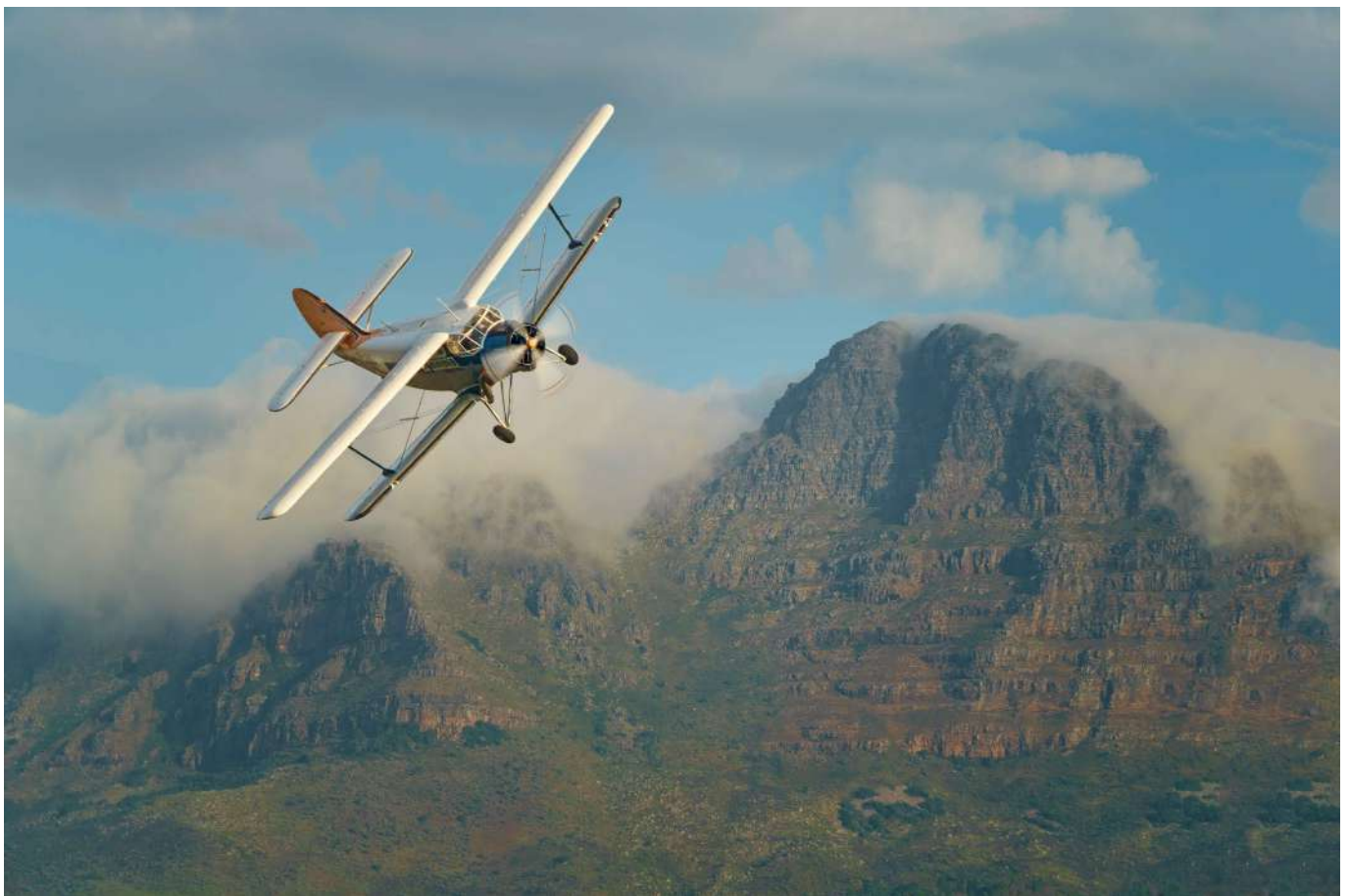

Image 6: My image as submitted to HPS.

EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

Although I cannot say that I have thoroughly tested Krea, it does seem to be worth consideration as a tool to provide editing assistance.

While I was at it, I also had a go at editing a **portrait**. Krea did a good job! However, the girl in the edited picture did not look like the same person as in the original. So, for editing family shots, this is not too useful. But for editing a stranger, for whom you do not have a signed model release, this is great!

A couple of other points:

   Krea didn't appear to work with TIF files.
   Krea didn't appear to recognize imbedded color spaces. It certainly did not imbed
      any colour space information in its output .png files.

I next had a go at using Krea's ability to **Generate** images from text input. (Image 7 is one of the better ones!). The generated files (free-version of course) were much smaller (512 x 512 px). Krea has no idea what an Antonov AN-2 looks like, and in fact has some funny ideas about what any type of aircraft looks like, except perhaps, for a hot-air balloon!

For comparison purposes, I tried out Adobe Firefly (currently free in Beta version) using the same sorts of text (Image 8).

Once again, I got some strange looking results, but they were probably better than what Krea managed.

Here again, the Firefly AI also seems to do a good job on the mountains and skies.

Image 7: "Antonov AN-2 aircraft flying over Stellenbosch Mountains".
Krea version

Image 8: "Antonov AN-2 biplane flying over Stellenbosch mountains" by Firefly

EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

Krea seems to do a bit better with generating landscapes and buildings. So, I tried out "A shack in Stellenbosch Mountains". (See Image 9.)

The Krea generated image was a bit dark and drab, so I have pulled up the shadows and applied some vibrancy in Photoshop.

I had a go at generating scenes with people too. Here, Krea did not do a good job. In one case I asked for a boy playing soccer, and an 8–10-year-old youngster appeared with a moustache! It also has the usual AI problem with fingers on hands.

All-in-all, the Generation capabilities of Krea are a bit dubious. But, as with all AI programmes, it's just a matter of time, and time passes very quickly in the AI world.
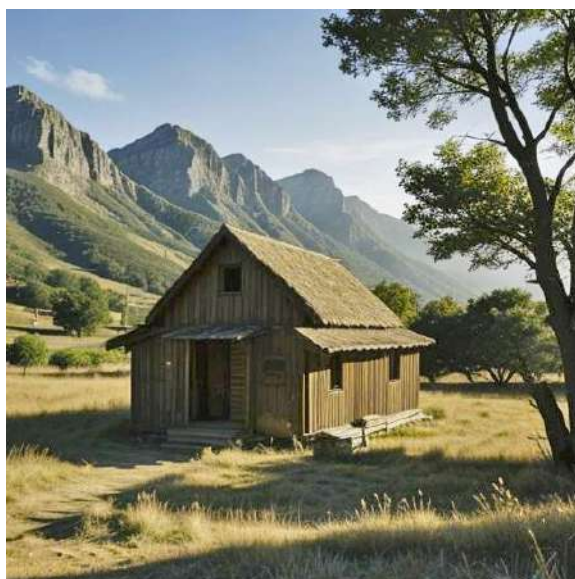

Image 9: "A Shack in Stellenbosch Mountains" Krea version

ODDS & ENDS

Overpowering the Sun at 1/80,000th of a Second

Gary Friedman writes in his latest blog: *"I've been a BIG fan of wireless flash since the 1990's, ever since Minolta invented it. (See my wireless flash gallery on the Friedman Archives website.) So, when Sony introduced the Alpha 9 III with its earth-shattering global shutter, I got excited about the prospect of the elimination of the flash sync speed, combined with the top shutter speed of (wait for it) 1/80,000th of a second which really captured my imagination. I dreamt of being able to shoot outdoor portraits on a bright day, wide open using flash without needing a neutral density filter to bring the shutter speed down to under 1/250th, as is required of conventional cameras with focal plane shutters. I further fantasized about being able to control my ambient light to the point of making it look completely black, with only the light from the flash illuminating my subject, regardless of how bright it was outside.*

So, was I able to do it? I've made two YouTube videos on this topic, the first of which demonstrates the capability:

Overpowering the Sun

Pairing Sony's Radio Wireless Flashes

Are you impressed, or what?"

Tony Kuyper's Magic Mixer

Re: The conversion from Colour to B&W. I have previously mentioned that, before Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 became available for free, I used a Photoshop Action that I had cobbled together to convert my images to B&W. The most frustrating step of that action was the layer that utilized Photoshop's Channel Mixer filter. This could do wonderful things if you were lucky; but moving any one of the sliders could also cause huge disruptions. It was painful to use, so I left that layer untouched if possible!

I have also previously mentioned Tony Kuyper, who is considered by many to be the grandfather of Luminosity Mask manipulations. I first learnt about Tony's work at the 2010 PSSA Congress in Clarens. Since then, I have remained on his mailing list. Unfortunately, his stuff has left me behind, because I continue to use the outdated CS6 version of Photoshop.

But many of you out there gave up, and accepted Adobe's pay-by-the-month business offering. You have the latest up to date version of Photoshop. If this is the case, I suggest that you may want to look into what we have here.

Two days ago, I received Tony's latest email flyer advertising his Magic Mixer. Basically, this is a Photoshop plug-in panel designed to take control of the wayward Channel Mixer filter. I thought, "perhaps this is interesting, let me take a look at the video" (12 minutes).

Wow! Knowing what I do about how the Channel Mixer is capable of turning a coloured image into an amazing B&W photo, I can understand what a gem this is. And at the price of USD 10, this is an absolute steal. (Unfortunately, Tony has confirmed that it cannot be used with my outdated CS6.)

Have a look at the video.

Then, grab the offer.

10 Tips for Remarkable iPhone Photos!

Recently Rad Drew published an article on PhotoPXL on taking quality pictures using your iPhone. I say your iPhone, because I use an Android instead. But, the suggestions look good to me, so I thought that perhaps the HPS iPhone users might be able to benefit from the suggestions.

Click on the image to access the article.
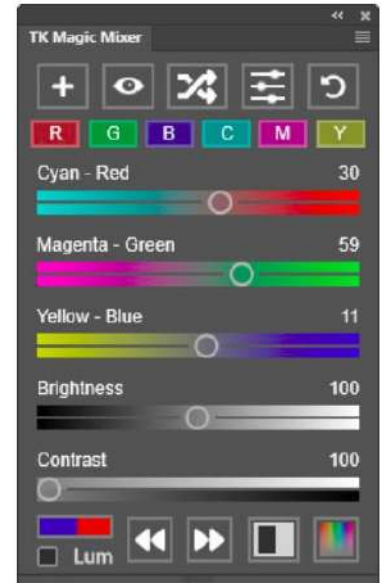
At the recent Stellenbosch Airshow 2024 outing, some of us met Norman. He drew our attention to the fact that there is an Air Force museum at the Ysterplaat Air Base.

There are many complementary reports to be found on the internet. The best time to visit is on Saturdays. Remember to take your ID Card to identify yourself, as this is an active Air Force Base.

ANTENIE PORTRAIT WORKSHOP JUNE 2024

Last year, I had planned a portrait workshop for members, but finding a suitable and affordable venue was a problem. In the meantime, I have found a suitable venue with safe parking in Stellenbosch, with the result that I could do a workshop now.

Without going into all the detail now, I am planning a workshop for a maximum of 6 people in order to allow each person to spend enough time setting up and posing a model or two. The plan is to have 2 light sets available, each with a set of three lights and a background with (hopefully) the possibility of changing backgrounds. The intention is to give as many options and variations as practically possible for each participant. However, the workshop will also include some homework for each participant before the time. Details will be made available to those who are interested.

The proposed date: Saturday 29th June 2024 at Stellenbosch. The cost should be reasonable, depending on the final quote from the venue and the number of participants. Those members who are interested can sms, phone or WhatsApp me at 073-3037-125, or email: antenie@adept.co.za (first come first served).

I will give full details regarding what is available to those who are interested. Looking forward to seeing some of our members attending.

Antenie

PSSA NEWS
Restructuring of PSSA Membership Fees - April 2024

Dear Member

Background

Approximately 30% of all PSSA Affiliated Club members are members of PSSA. While these individual members do receive some benefits that non-members do not receive, a large portion of the costs incurred in the running of the PSSA are for the benefit of all clubs and their members.

The board has deliberated this at length and it has been agreed that there needs to be a more equitable share of the costs, effectively based on paying for the services rendered by the PSSA.

It must also be borne in mind that the club affiliation fees have not been increased for nearly 10 years.

The principle adopted was to reduce the general membership fee and increase the club affiliation fee and the fees for individual-specific services such as Diamond ratings, DPSSA, EPSSA and Honours.

To reduce the overall fees it was also decided that a portion of the additional salon entry fee for non-members would be paid to PSSA from each salon. The original intention was that this should have always been paid to PSSA but this practice has fallen away.

The amount of the adjustments, to be as equitable as possible, would be fairly substantial and therefore it was decided to change over a few years.

The new fees are as follows:

Membership Fees
These have been reduced by 20% and are now:

	Ordinary members	**Joint Ordinary members**
Entrance fee	180.00	300.00
Annual fee	480.00	560.00

	International members	**Joint International**
Entrance fee	280.00	450.00
Annual fee	732.00	840.00

Students and Scholars	**Up to 19 years**	**20 to 21 years**
Entrance fee	nil	130.00
Annual fee	120.00	224.00

Discounts
If paid before the 30th of June 2024 a further discount of 10% applies and 20% for pensioners.

Club Affiliation Fees
These are split into 3 broad categories based on the membership of each club.
Up to 19 members   300.00
20 to 49 members   500.00
50 plus members   750.00

Diamond Ratings / DPSSA / EPSSA
The fees will remain at R180.00 but the metal badge will now be an optional extra at a cost of R150.00

There have been large increases in courier costs and the cost of badges has more than doubled.

Honours
As with the above the metal badge will be an optional extra at R150.00
The fees for the various honours are

LPSSA   350.00
APSSA   390.00
FPSSA   416.00
MPSSA   520.00

Image Magazine
With effect from 2025, the printed Honours Image will only be sent to the successful Honours applicants. Any member wishing to receive a printed magazine will be charged at the cost of the magazine and courier fees TBA.

The honours magazine will then be made available on the website in the same way the e-Image is currently published.

Kind regards

GEOFF FELDON

LPSSA

1st VICE PRESIDENT, PSSA