Proposed South Australian AGM Event in 2018

On September 8th at the Torrens Valley Branch Committee meeting, our newly appointed National Secretary, Mark Seja made a request for the Branch to consider running an AGM Event in S.A. possibly in 2018 or 2019. On recovering from the initial shock, the Committee was at one that the best possible outcome would be to involve all the S.A. Branches wherever possible.

The idea was then an agenda item at the Port Pirie Odyssey Presidents and Secretaries meeting and received a very positive hearing but the Torrens Valley Committee was adamant that the final decision whether we ‘go for it’ was best coming from the Ulysse Members and not the Branch Committees hence this communique to the Branch Secretaries to promulgate to your members. (The Torrens Valley Branch Committee was firmly behind the hosting of this AGM Event)

I immediately contacted current Mallee Branch President Graeme Rule for his opinion. Graeme, as a past National Committee ExOfficio National AGM Event Coordinator (NAGMEC) is very qualified to make this assessment. He was completely in agreement and spoke to the affirmative at the Port Pirie Odyssey meeting.

On a short private holiday to the Riverland Region during the following week and by shear chance, I attended the Riverland Field Days Event at their dedicated site some 3 kilometres out of Barmera on the road to Monash (Sturt Highway) and noticed the great facilities there. I had arranged to meet Graeme on the following day when he asked me of my opinion on the Field Day site as a possible AGM Event site. We went through the list of amenities and the pros and cons and quickly came to the conclusion that it was indeed a perfect place for an AGM Event. All the boxes were ticked!!

Here listed are the immediate advantages and amenities located at the Barmera Field Days site.

12 Hectares fully grassed and flat
Serviced with water, power (500 outlets), phone land lines and sewerage.
Large steel pavilion 72M X 20M
PA speaker system
9M x 6M stage
Administration Office 7M x 5M with kitchenette etc.
5 Food Shelters 6M X 12M
Toilet Facilities in 2 locations
Fenced with a 2M cyclone construction around the complete perimeter making the site easier to secure. The only imported amenities needed would be transportable toilet and shower units and a marquee large enough to sit 3,000 members.
Sealed side road leading into the main entrance - there are 4 entrances in total. The only possible downside is the 100 kph speed limited highway running past the site but I noticed that during the Field Days this was temporarily lowered to 80 kph. Initial enquiries to the authorities have confirmed that the lowering of the speed limit would not be a problem during a significant event.

As we anticipate around 3,000 members to attend the 2018 Event with the half these members camping onsite, the facilities would easily cater for this number as well as the ever growing RV numbers. The number of hard beds in the adjacent Riverland region is around 1200 therefore catering for those needing this type of accommodation. The surrounding major towns of Berri, Loxton, Waikerie, Barmera and Renmark are close by and within easy commuting distance and have excellent hard accommodation facilities in the form of Hotel / Motel, high grade Caravan Parks short term house rental, plus the ready availability of supplementary Houseboat accommodation. One potentially attractive option would be to import large paddle steamers to be moored for the week at Renmark or Berri to cater for any overflow of those needing hard bed accommodation. There are several large halls nearby to hold the AGM and elections.

This AGM Event will be known as the Riverland AGM and seeing as it is within the Mallee Branch precincts, they will be the nominal hosts. However we hope that the AGM Event Host Committee
that will organise and oversee this National event will comprise of interested Ulysses Club members from many S.A. and interstate Branches including the close by Mildura Branch.

As a result of the need to consult with as many members as possible, National Secretary Mark Seja, Torrens Valley Branch President, Steve Lennard, Torrens Valley Branch Secretary, Linda Price, and myself have already attended the Fleurieu and Torrens Valley Branch meetings and intend in the next week to attend both Adelaide and Lower Murray Branch meetings to update members as to what is happening and to seek the level of support required. Graeme has personally informed Mallee Branch members. Because of the tyranny of distance, we will be unable to attend the Port Lincoln, Whyalla, Limestone Coast and Mallee Branch meetings, hence this correspondence to you.

The National Committee has over the years compiled a very comprehensive document in DVD form which describes in detail what exactly is needed to host an AGM Event. The NatCom also provides an experienced NAGMEC as liaison, currently Rob White, who will guide the Event Host Committee and Sub Committees over the ensuing 3 years of organising through to the completion of the event.

So where do we go from here? A Steering Committee has been formed and consists of Graeme Rule, Linda Price as the Event Secretary and myself. We are also in constant liaison with Rob White. We have until the end of December 2014 to construct a Proposal Document to go to the NatCom for their consideration for 2018 or maybe 2019 depending on the number of applications for the 2018 year. Their decision will be announced at the 2015 AGM Event in Wodonga.

The Proposal Document, intended to assure the NatCom of our capabilities to host an event, will contain detailed information on the site, tourism potential of the Riverland to attract members to the area, support levels from the 3 Local Councils that form the Riverland region, support from Police, Tourism Organisations, etc and information to convince the National Committee of the S.A. member’s level of commitment to the Event. We are extremely fortunate to have Graeme Rule residing in the Riverland with his local knowledge and knowhow from many years of liaising on AGM Event matters. If we are successful in being allocated the AGM Event for 2018, we will have some 12 months to form the Host Committee from interested members and position suitable candidates to the various portfolios. Work will then commence in earnest some 24 months out with major items such as the Marquee (Hoeker) ordered, the site locked in, extra toilet and shower blocks and food suppliers booked etc. Locking in major sponsors will be an important part of this process. Whilst many of these responsibilities are borne by the NatCom local input is considered imperative.

In preparation, both Graeme and I have written a comprehensive letter to the Riverland Local Government Association which comprises all council CEO’s, Mayors and Deputy Mayors to inform them of exactly what they can expect during the AGM Event Week. We will follow up this letter by attending a face to face joint meeting with them on December 3rd at Renmark. A copy of this letter to the Councillors is attached to this email/letter for your further information. Also attached is a letter of support from the Riverland peak tourism body, Destination Riverland, General Manager.

We seek your comments and input on this important matter and trust that you will promulgate this information to your members at branch level. You will receive another communique in some 12 months time asking for expressions of interest for members to join the Organising Committee. It is envisaged that this Committee will liaise via email on a regular basis with a site inspection and some meetings on a face to face basis.

Regards,

Neville Gray #3394
Graeme Rule #17528
Linda Price #51526