



CHANGE FROM UNCLE TO OOM

When last we met I informed you of my decision to ditch Jabulani's uncle because of his rather odd view on issues political and economical (tend to agree with his opinion on the interest rate though). Reality is what would life be without a mentor?? Accordingly, I have in the interim made acquaintance with a lighter pigmented not uncle but Oom. Did I hear someone chirp "same difference!"?

As is the pattern in this new (getting very expensive) South Africa, Oom Koos has trekked from the platteland farming community to the stad. Not a very pleasant transition but unfortunately economically necessary. Oom Koos may I add has passed the employable stage and is but a reluctant migrant accompanying his son (my seun Sarel) who has been lucky enough to obtain employment in the city.

I have decided to draw on the wisdom of this man of the earth, pure farm stock. I reason it may be a breath of fresh air to be advised by one untainted by the views of the corrupt and wily city folk. But first one has to brief Oom Koos on the history and problems besetting our industry which I duly do.

Oom Koos fishes out a pipe, (have not seen one like that in the last twenty years genuine relic I assume from the great trek) and a pouch of tobacco from his pocket. He begins the ritual of loading compressing and lighting, which is quite an unhurried routine. This Oom knows he is not going anywhere and he is not in a hurry to get there, so I calmly sit back on the chair and wait. We are perched on a balcony fourth floor; Oom has resigned himself to this cramped lifestyle, no spacious veranda, no clean air, odour of the veld, sound of cattle, barking of dogs and songs of birds. Here its exhaust fumes, tyres screeching noisy engines, rude cold suspicious hostile city people. Hell, even the dogs here walk skew and give you a sideways glance everything's on knife edge fast life. Just when you get the hang of today it's tomorrow. Old Oom Koos is a tough boere but this life is getting at him so on this balcony Oom Koos will take his time go through his pipe ritual and the city could implode for all he cares.

PLATTELAND WISDOM

"Nee wat!! Geen probleem!" say's Oom Koos as he offers up what he deems to be a solution. Hot ash escapes from the pipe and singses Oom Koos who lets out a "bliksem". "Kyk ou seun" begins the Oom "eerstens vra ek om verskoning ek is eintlik nie engels sprekend nie so just ignore my Afrikaans accent and lyster mooi na wat ek vir u nou vertel."

"Why not have a towing indaba comprising all the stake holders. Much has been discussed, debated and planned surrounding the towing fraternity. There has been some progress with the help of established bodies like the towing associations. Much more can be achieved with a concerted and cohesive approach.

The insurance sector can make meaningful change by adopting a unified approach on this matter. Individuals, within the insurance sector, with ideas should engage interested parties with transparency in formulating an all inclusive approach. Any individualistic approach with own company interest regarding this sector will definitely not achieve success.” (Oom draws on his pipe exhales and for a second there could not help reflecting that he was at home with all these exhaust fumes. What’s the difference?)

Oom Koos continues. “This is one sector which government at present does not consider a priority. Government has enough on their hands dealing with the taxi sector, and when lobbied, by concerned parties within the towing industry, displays courteous interest. It would be interesting to see the outcome of any engagement on this topic between groupings of insurance company procurement personnel. They have forums that may be used namely; SAIA and the SAICB, as a platform for inter company engagement on common issues. Alternately the initiative may be taken by any insurance company in extending an open invitation to interested parties to attend a meeting/workshop in this regard. The positive spin offs will include not only the realisation of a savings but also attract the attention of the uninsured motorist who will then deem it viable to carry some form of cover for protection.

Collectively the insurance houses have the resources, expertise and influence” to bring about major change in the towing industry. What may be lacking is the will to tackle this sector.”

Miraculously the pipe is still smouldering and Oom Koos takes another suck at it.

Ja Nee wat?? That is my Afrikaner Oom’s advice on this issue. Maybe someone out there has a better solution. Government (National Department of Transport) doe not have a clue and tries to palm of the responsibility to the Department of Trade and Industry also Government. Possibly officials are content to draw their salaries and abscond responsibility to the motoring public. Should we rather not address the problem with the trade union COSATU?? COSATU seems to get thing going and make things happen!! (Oom frowns on the COSATU proposal.)

Oom is about to take his afternoon nap. Who knows what he dreams of locked in his cramped room on a fourth floor apartment?? Maybe the bosveld ?? I saw a photograph of a red headed tannie enquired and was told with a sad expression “ sy is oorlede”. Buried on a farm now abandoned. Maybe better that she is not here Oom exclaimed she would have been miserable in this environment. Does he dream of her and better days that once were and will never return??

Catch you in our next edition with my new Oom. One thing is sure this Oom catches on quick enough not bad for a plaas japie. Guaranteed he will, given time, come up with a solution. VRYSTAAT!

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