

Bus Buzz



Monthly newsletter for Golden Arrow passengers

Sharon Reagon takes top honours at National Driver of the Year Competition

Golden Arrow driver Sharon Reagon was crowned National Female Driver of the Year for 2014 at an awards ceremony hosted by the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) in Pretoria recently.

Reagon competed with drivers from across the country at a three-day long nail-biting competition held at the Boekoenhoutkloof Traffic Training College.

According to the RTMC the competition was “an inclusive call for all role players to identify tangible and measureable solutions to make both South Africa’s roads and its road users safer, in line with our commitment ... to deal aggressively with the scourge of road carnages on our roads, to ensure that we reduce them by half by the end of the decade”.

The competition starts at company level, proceeding to a regional level, provincial level and culminating in the national championship. The six categories include bus, rigid, rigid with four-wheel trailer, delivery and articulated vehicles.

Each day participants were subjected to the following tests: alcohol test, eye test, pre-trip inspection, track test, and road test. According to Reagon, it was no walk in the park. “When we got to Johannesburg for the competition, it was pouring with rain and the weather was just miserable in general. To top that, the buses we were given to observe had some of the instruments positioned differently to what we are accustomed to,” she explains.

When we interview Reagon she is delighted but there is also a sadness as one of her mentors who recently passed away was not able to share in her victory. She explains: “I never thought that I could achieve this much because I always underestimated my abilities. It was only with the encouragement of the late Faizal Hankey (Learning Centre Training Instructor), that I decided to change my attitude and become more positive. I made the positive choice by improving my



SISTERS DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES: (from right to left) GABS driver Sharon Reagon poses proudly with Training and Development Manager Phumeza Nobhongoza and Area Manager Mario Gaffley after winning the National Female Driver of the Year Competition

track record at work, my driving skills, sticking to the road rules as well as company policies and basically my attitude towards my work and the Company”.

So far positive thinking seems to have been a wise choice as Reagon has won Golden Arrow’s Female Driver of the Year,

The Best of the Best competition, Western Province Female Driver of the Year and now National Female Driver of the Year. Reagon feels strongly that more women should participate in these types of competitions. “I want to encourage all the women in the Company especially the drivers to empower themselves and believe that whatever they set their minds to can be achieved if they step up and give it their best,” she says.

Time for training:



The next step to becoming a bus driver

In this edition of Bus Buzz we look at the training required to become a driver.

Once a potential driver has passed through the initial background checking process and has been deemed a potential Golden Arrow driver it's time to knuckle down and get learning. Golden Arrow's Learning and Assessment Centre is Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) and Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (MERSETA) accredited and therefore complies with a number of stringent requirements.

All learner drivers will spend at least 12 weeks at the Learning and Assessment Centre. The curriculum is both theoretical and practical and is geared towards providing each driver with a solid skills base in terms of driving proficiency and customer relations. Induction is first on the list and it explains

Golden Arrow's values and mission statement.

Next up is occupational health and safety, customer relations and the application of basic business principles. Thereafter drivers are prepared for the rigorous job requirements for becoming a duty bus driver, which include delivering road transport services in a professional manner, understanding road signs, basic vehicle maintenance, parking and an understanding of how to handle unexpected situations safely and calmly.

A lot of time is then spent on intensive driver training making sure that each driver knows how to handle a bus in all conditions in the safest possible manner. If a potential driver has made it through this vigorous training process they are subjected to formative testing to verify their ability to provide quality customer service and then finally a summative assessment which involves taking a bus out on a route



TIME TO HIT THE BOOKS: A Learning and Assessment Instructor guides a learner driver through the driver's curriculum, making sure that the learner is adequately skilled for the road ahead

and rating the driver on how the bus is handled and how various traffic situations are responded to.

Golden Arrow backs innovative public service



SERVICE REWARDED: (from left to right) St Joseph's Matron Audrey Gourrah, Executive Director Thea Patterson, Fundraiser Claire Binneman, National Minister of Science and Technology Derek Hanekom, GABS' CEO Nic Cronjé pose proudly with the silver award

As a responsible and caring corporate citizen, Golden Arrow recognises the dire lack of funding available to non-governmental organisations and social upliftment projects in the Cape Metropole. Setting aside the funding crisis, these projects and organisations face an even greater challenge: sustainability.

With this in mind Golden Arrow felt that The Impumelelo Social Innovation Awards and its projects present a real opportunity to give recognition to projects and organisations that are innovative and sustainable and that make a difference in the lives of those South Africans that need it most.

It therefore felt entirely fitting that Golden Arrow should sponsor an award for an organisation that holds a very special place in our hearts: St Joseph's Home. St Joseph's is situated in Montana just a few hundred metres from our largest depot, Arrowgate. It is not the proximity of St Joseph's that matters however, but

rather the care and love that they offer chronically ill impoverished children who have life-threatening and life-limiting conditions.

According to Impumelelo, St Joseph's is remarkable in a number of ways: "St Joseph's differs from similar projects in that it offers a holistic service under one roof. The project empowers parents, restores the health of sick children, provides formal nursing education, and is a well maintained facility. It is in many ways comparable to private medical care".

Golden Arrow Corporate Affairs Executive John Damert echoes these sentiments: "Golden Arrow believes in giving back to the communities that it serves but we are also acutely aware that sustainability is essential for any community-based organisation. St. Joseph's is a truly deserving recipient of an Impumelelo award and Golden Arrow is honoured to sponsor the prize money".

Be fire alert!

Community corner

information .. useful numbers .. first aid .. health

Every day South Africans experience the horror of fire. But most people don't understand the dangers fire can cause. Only when we know the true nature of fire can we start to prepare ourselves and our families. Each year thousands of people die and are injured in fires, many of which could be prevented.

The Fire Brigade Services (FBS), a part of Western Cape Disaster Management, believes fire deaths can be reduced by teaching people the basic facts about fire:

Fire is Fast

In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house. In minutes, a house can be engulfed in flames. Most fires occur in the home when people are asleep. If you wake up to a fire, you won't have time to grab valuables because fire spreads too quickly and the smoke is too thick. There is only time to escape.

Heat is More Threatening than Flames

A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs. This heat can melt clothes to your skin. In just a couple of minutes a room can get so hot that everything in it ignites at once – this is called flashover.

Fire is Dark

Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness.

If you wake up to a fire you may

be blinded, disoriented and unable to find your way around the home you've lived in for years.

Smoke and Toxic Gases Kill More People than Flames Do

Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces smoke and poisonous gases that kill. Breathing even small amounts of smoke and toxic gases can make you drowsy, disoriented and short of breath. The odourless, colourless fumes can lull you into a deep sleep before the flames reach your door. You may not wake up in time to escape.

Fire Survival Tips

In the event of a fire, remember that time is the biggest enemy and every second counts.

- Escape first, then call for help. Develop a home fire escape plan and designate a meeting place outside.
- Make sure everyone in the family knows two ways to escape from every room.
- Practise feeling your way out with your eyes closed. Never stand up in a fire, always crawl low under the smoke and try to keep your mouth covered.
- Practice your home escape plan frequently with your family.
- Never return to a burning building for any reason; it may cost you your life.
- Finally, having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a home fire.

Outdoor Fire Safety

Open fires are a common cause of uncontrolled fires in the Western Cape. It is a good idea not to start a fire when it is hot, dry and windy. Check with your local fire protection association or fire department before making fires outside. On

certain days fires will be prohibited, be aware of the daily "fire danger" rating.

Braai Safety Tips:

- Children should never be allowed to start a gas or wood braai or play near the braai area.
- Keep a braai well away from any surrounding vegetation or flammable materials, structures, children and pets.
- Protect yourself by wearing a heavy apron and an oven mitt that fits high up over your forearm.
- Always wear short sleeve shirts or roll sleeves up when braaing.
- Never use a braai indoors. Apart from the danger of causing a fire in your home, it can also cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Never use a flammable liquid (e.g. petrol, paraffin) to start a braai fire. Only use paper, kindling or store bought firelighters.
- Never use any kind of fuel to re-ignite or build up a fire – this is certainly one of the most dangerous practices that can be considered.
- Soak the coals with water before you discard them.
- For gas braais, always store the gas cylinder outside, make sure the valve is not leaking and ensure it is properly turned off when not in use.
- Before lighting a gas braai, check all connections with soapsuds (use a soap and water solution). If bubbles appear at any connection when opening the valve, a qualified lp gas specialist must repair the leak before use.

Courtesy: Western Cape Provincial Government