On Entering the Profession

■ by Lynn Fearnhead

In speaking to you about the physiotherapy profession, I am going to compare it to a life-long cruise on a ship – the physiotherapist's version of the QEII.

You have spent four years planning (and paying for!) this trip with your travel agents – the Wits Physio Travel Department. They offered you a stopover in basic sciences, a fairly lengthy visit to Anatomy and Physiology, then came the cruise highlights OPD, Ortho, Paeds, Neuro, Community and the excitement of ICU – like the great ports of the world!

And now at Graduation you will receive your tickets for your "cruise of a lifetime" on the SA Physiotherapy.

The ships security officer (aka The Professional Board for Physiotherapy) will be there to check your boarding passes. They also ensure that no one seriously misbehaves on board ship.

The crew (office-bearers of the SASP – under Captain Frances Glauber and First Officer, Lisa de Blois) will be there to welcome you and help you to your cabins. You can decide whether you want to go 1st Class, 3rd Class or even steerage!

You can quietly enjoy your cruise or be like the attention seekers you find on any cruise – the ones wearing the smallest bikini's and those fighting to get a place at the Captain's table. This was traditionally a quiet cruise ship but the crew now actively encourages you to get involved and to get the attention of the paparazzi – we want the world to know what is happening on the SA

Physiotherapy.

The crew's primary role is to help you get the most enjoyment and satisfaction from the cruise and offers an amazing variety of on board entertainment like OMT1 and ICU Workshops, Acupuncture, Congresses and Updates. They invite overseas entertainers like Carolyn Richardson, Paul Hodges and Francine St George to name a few.

They are also there to steer the ship along the course largely determined by the travel agents. Sometimes, as at present, they have to battle through heavy seas where the ship is battered by the huge waves of managed health care, the uncertainty of medical aid schemes and changes within the public health health service. They have to avoid places like the "Bermuda Triangle" and be constantly on watch for ice-bergs – we all know what happened to the Titanic!

Our ship is not alone – we are in constant communication with the rest of the convoy (otherwise known as the WCPT) and though we would prefer that you enjoy our cruise, because of our good relationship with the convoy, it is possible to change ships.

A unique feature of our ship is the on-board training one can undertake to become a member of the crew. You too could become the Captain of this ship! We must remember that whatever our position on the ship — we are all in this boat together! By working together we can all have a safer, faster and more enjoyable cruise on the SA Physiotherapy.



