

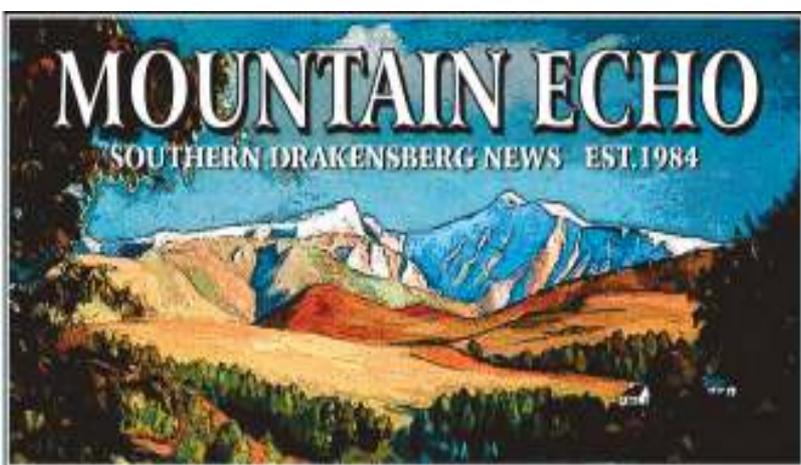
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*This beautiful sunset over Easton Farm belies what Lynne Christie describes Foot and Mouth Disease as BRUTAL!!*

The Underberg Farmers Association called on Lee Bryant (**master of your own chaos, MOYOC** a platform and podcast for personal growth, emotional resilience, and mental health) to talk to our farmers and their wives on 17 & 18 February on the **Power of Inner Control: Choosing Calm over Chaos**. Lee talks from a background of conflict and human death and casualties at war. The fight against foot and mouth disease is also a war where the tools to fight it are arriving late in the form of vaccines. South Africans and particularly farmers are resourceful and resilient. Uncertainty about the future we saw at the beginning of covid with potential loss of life. Now, farmers could lose what they have put their life and soul into and lose it. They see their animals suffering and when they die their suffering ends but the farmers suffering carries on. Keep the farmers in your thoughts, prayers, and actions. Now that a limited number of vaccines have arrived the task is to ensure the strategic, disciplined distribution and application of these limited initial doses to achieve maximum impact, protecting production, limiting economic losses, and preventing further spread at a district level as promised by the state veterinary services for this state controlled disease. Farmers are experiencing high levels of

anxiety over Foot and Mouth Disease, but life must go on. All we can do is help in fighting FMD by following Bio Security Protocols and trying to limit the spread of infection. FMD being declared a National Disaster says it all. While the Drak Challenge which was cancelled due to foot and mouth disease, Khotso produced an innovative and controlled event where a short stretch of river in front of Balam River deck hosted The African Slalom championships with five African countries competing. Adversity always encourages innovation and a new annual event could have been born. Trout fishermen are fishing at resorts and in the Ezemvelo parks stretches of river. to limit the spread of FMD on farms. Running events are continuing in the Drakensberg Transfrontier Park. Other events during the year are still being publicised in our events diary. Daily life is not the same in this beautiful part of the world, but the Drakensberg's grandeur is timeless.

**By Paul Welch**  
**AGRICULTURE** is the main economic driver of the Kwa Sani area followed by **TOURISM**  
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- FEB 28** Country Market @ **The Local Collection** last Saturday of the month 9am to 13.00 **contact Lauren 079 244 9601**
- MARCH 7** Country Market @ **Trout walk centre** first Saturday of the month **contact Alison 079 351 0901**
- MAR 18** Garden Club Meeting @Felicity Oats's garden situated in Links Road opposite the Underberg Country Club
- MAR 25** Quiz "friends, Romans, countrymen" @ Underberg Country Club 6pm. R60pp, 4 per team **contact Trish 066 0033773**
- MAR 27 - 29** Awaken Yoga Festival For more information and to purchase tickets, **visit www.awakenyogafestival.org/**
- APR 2 - 6** Splashy Fen Music Festival **www.splashyfen.co.za.**
- APR 19** MOTHS fun bowls day dress casual or fancy dress "tramp theme" **contact Hylton 083 627 9673**
- APR 24-26** Ultra Trail Drakensberg for info **www.ultra traildrak.com**
- APR 26** GXA TRAIL RUN 14km starts 8.30am and finishes at Sani Pass Hotel #ultra traildrakensberg
- MAY 3** KENMO LAKE PICNIC see the autumn colours Himeville museum fundraiser
- MAY 6 - 9** KAP Sani2C for info **Sani2C.co.za**
- 7-9 MAY** Polocrosse international SA versus USA U19 (development) and U25 (official) @ Underberg Grounds. Contact Melissa 0827363286.
- MAY 21 - 24** The Giant's Cup for more info **www.thegiantscuptrail.com**
- MAY 29 - 31** KAP sani2c nonstop Visit **www.nonstop.sani2c.co.za** for more information and to enter.
- JUNE 13 - 14** Himeville Tip Top Tennis Tournament **contact Viv Turner 082 886 0267**
- OCT 2 - 4** 2026 UFA Agri & Lifestyle Show! **contact admin@kznufa.co.za** to book a stall
- OCT 3** Sani Pass TT visit **www.sanipasstt.com** to enter
- NOV 14** Sani Stagger entries open 4 March 2026 **info@Sanistagger.co.za**
- DEC 12** Christmas market @ **The Local Collection** **contact Lauren 079 244 9601**

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**Highlands Church International**  
 Johann and Debbie Van As 033 7011470  
 Sunday: 08:30 Prayer Meeting 09:00 Celebration Service 09:00 Kids for Jesus (all ages welcome) Monday: Homegroups 18:30 Tuesday: 15:00 Pevensey Ministry Thursday: 18:00 Prayer Meeting Alternate Fridays: 06:00 Men's Sunrise coffee (confirm 033 7011470)

**Underberg Congregational Church**  
 Church Times:  
 Sunday Services at 09:00. Children & Junior Church at 09:30 Bible Studies on Thursdays: at 10:00, contact Erika Smith 082 - 688 6759 & at 18:00, contact Ray Scott 083 - 413 6917. We hire out our facilities at the House of Grace for private or business meetings / functions / training courses. Contact Daniela 082 - 403 8864

**St Michael's and All Angels service** The Eucharist service is at 9 am every Sunday with Sunday school at the same time. Thank you. Rev Kayla Urbasch 082 466 8134

**Berg Community Fellowship meeting at Faithway Christian School 11 arbuckle Street**  
 Every Sunday at 9 a.m. Phone Pastor Dennis on 0834407889 for more info.

**Verse: Isaiah 55:12**

'You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.'  
 - Joy and peace are heavenly gifts that God wants to give you.  
 - This joy and peace is not dependent on circumstances.  
 - It is dependent on His presence and promises in our lives.  
 - God wants to lead you with joy and peace, even in challenging times.  
 PRAYER: Lord, thank You for the blessing of Your joy and peace that I can enjoy in my life. I will hold onto the hope I have in You and I will trust You to fulfil Your promises in Your impeccable timing. Amen.

Pastor Andrew W Roebert  
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**UNDERBERG R3 200 000 FAIRMOUNT ESTATE:** This beautiful, 3 bedroom, all en-suite, home is ideal as a holiday home or for family living. The open plan living area flows out onto a covered patio, through several stack back doors, and with incredible views, as well as mountain views from two bedrooms. There is a small study / office as well. The kitchen is open plan and well appointed, with separate scullery / laundry plus pantry. There is a lovely casual lounge as well as a formal lounge, divided by the dining room, with incredible views from each of these rooms.

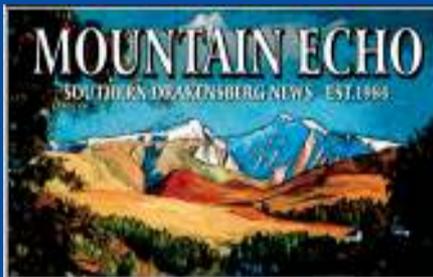


**UNDERBERG R13 000 000**  
 Shaggywood is a 450-hectare beef farm located on the outskirts of the Underberg/Himeville district, featuring 50 hectares of arable land with crops like rye, clover, Cocksfoot, and Kikuyu, partly gravity and pump irrigated using draglines and a travelling gun, along with 20 hectares of Eragrostis hay producing 900 bales situated north of the river. The remaining land comprises well-managed veld grazing. The farm includes a modest 3-bedroom house, eight stables, a six-point swing-over dairy, staff quarters, and storage facilities, including a thatched rondavel and a separate storeroom, with an established garden. It has a DWAF irrigation permit for 17 hectares. The farm is listed at R13 million, excluding VAT



**UNDERBERG R7 950 000 TO BE SOLD AS A GOING CONCERN & FULLY FURNISHED.** This welcoming 4 ha accommodation property is situated on the tarred Drak Gardens Road, less than 5 km from Underberg. Accommodation for 38 'bums in beds', this extremely well maintained lodge has contracts with German, Belgian, French and American Tour Companies, who has arrived with bus loads of guests and spent two nights whilst exploring our beautiful destination. The restaurant provides superior meals for both residents and local guests. Upscale furnishings and incorporating a variety of levels of accommodation, from budget to 5 star. Every bedroom has a television.

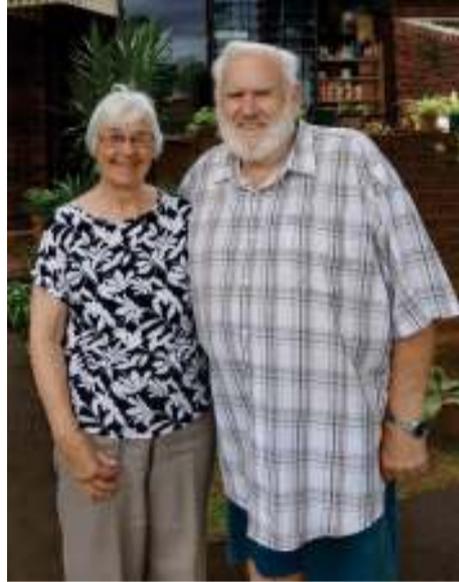
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**Should Auld Acquaintances Be Forgot!!**

After 17 fantastic years of "retired life" we are moving on to older pastures. We have decided to leave Underberg and finally retire to the MOTH complex in Pmb where we are nearer to more specialised medical service and don't need to spend so much of our pension on petrol and tyre/wheel repairs caused by the vengeful potholes etc on the R617. The decision was not taken lightly as we have befriended and been befriended by some of the most loving and caring humans on this planet. To start with first and foremost is Pevensey Place, residents, staff and management committee are more of a blessing than one could imagine in these modern and expensive times, God bless you all. John and Tracey Forsyth and the Mapstone Clan - how we lived without you Guys I will never know - a very special and caring family. Tim Hempson and family; the Craig Clan; the Champkins/du Toit family; the Congregational Church family; the Palframan family (and dogs); ComWatch/Farmwatch and gang; Gaylyn and the late John Pearce and the many friends we made - thank You Lord!  
 Last but by no means least "the Boot and Saddle MOTH Shellhole. To be part of this organi-



sation has taught me to be human again and realise there are still some very humans in the human race today. God bless you all!  
**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.** We will be visiting, especially Pevensey, so along the way we will meet up again. Much love  
**Chris & Lel Mattsson**

All at GWK wish Joan Van Heerden a very well deserved rest.  
 To all our customers, colleagues and friends; it is with a definite twinge of sadness that we confirm that Dearest Joan has elected to retire come end March 2026, this is after over 20 years of serving the best interests of our community and clients.  
 Joan will always be known for her somewhat outspoken way of eliciting signature to documents (which were probably completed by herself) from clients who dislike paperwork intensely, to further settlement of the matter to hand.  
 We have no doubt that Joans intentions were always good, putting our clients first and arguing their case ad nauseum, never taking no for an answer and definitely fighting a good fight for them, each and every one.  
 We shall miss her in many ways as I am sure will most of our customers, fortunately Joan will continue to reside in the Underberg area where she will cross paths with all of us again and again we hope. We shall endeavour to get her back into the office from time to time just to hear her ready laughter and banter, rest assured however that Judy van Niekerk has elected to join our team and will fill Joans boots in her own way, ensuring that our customers receive the service expected of us. Sincerely Geoff, Jemima and Bronwyn.....and Judy of course.



**MOTHS**

**From The Saddle of Boot and Saddle**  
 We still express our thoughts and support for our local farmers during this terrible FMD epidemic. Exciting news - our annual Fun Day Bowls Competition will be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> April. The theme is 'Tramp' or 'Hobo', so dress down and join us for a fun day. Our year plan has been finalised, and these are the events you can look forward too:  
**19 April** - Bowls Day Fund Raiser **24-26 April** - UTD Marathon - Aid Station at Balam. **TBC** - Boot and Saddle Medical Support Fund Poitjie Challenge **22 August** - Fund Raising Golf Day  
 Further to this, below are the dates of the upcoming parades to be held at the Himeville Cenotaph:  
 31 May - **End to the Anglo Boer War** - (Treaty of Vereeniging 31.05.1902)  
 13 July - **Dellville Wood Commemoration** - (15-20.07.1916)  
 20 September - **Young Veterans Day** and end of Border War - (01.11.1988)  
 07 November - **Poppy Day Collection**  
 08 November - **Remembrance Day / Armistice Day** - (11.11.1916)  
 All parades fall on a Sunday and commence at 11h00 Sharp  
 We have inducted one recruit to the Order, and we welcome JP Olivier to the fold. We look forward to his company and contribution. Should

you wish to get involved with the MOTH, either as a veteran or as a supporter of the Shellhole, please feel free to contact me. Monthly meetings held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at 18h00. **Ivan Reynolds - Old Bill - Boot and Saddle - 082 5300 935**



**BOOT & SADDLE SHELLHOLE**  
 REGISTRATION NO. 930020331



Invite you to join us for a

**BOWLS FUN DAY**

**Date : Sunday 19th April 2026**  
**Venue : Underberg Bowling Club**  
**Time : 08h30 for 09h00**  
**Dress : Casual or Fancy Dress - Think Tramp**  
**Contacts:**  
**Rod 082 569 8655, Len 079 094 1029**  
**Hylton 083 627 9673 Tex 082 806 6980**

**TWO WOLVES**

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. "One is Evil: - It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. "The other is Good: - It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."  
 The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"  
 The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed....."  
 (Printed in the Mountain Echo in October 2011) In these trying times of FMD we need to apply this to our lives.

**SPLASHY FEN 2026**  
2-6th APRIL

FRIDAY: *Goodluck.*  
SATURDAY: *GoldFish*  
SUNDAY: JEREMY LOOPS

BILLY RAFFOUL | NDLOVU YOUTH CHOIR | MATTHEW MOLE  
VAN PLETZEN | JACK AND THE WEATHERMAN | BOOSHLE G.  
VERANDA PANDA | WILL LINLEY | JESSE CLEGG | LOUISE CARVER  
ZEBRA 4AM | JEMMA KATE | THE KICKSTANDS | TANNER WAREHAM  
APPLE GULE | BLOODBROTHER | PHILLIP TAYLOR BAND

Corona

**SPLASHY FEN 2026**  
Splashy Fen raffle  
Draw on Friday 27th March 2026  
To stand a chance to win 2 Splashy Fen tickets valued at R2920, purchase a raffle ticket for only R200.

FOR FURTHER INFO CONTACT :  
MELANIE BOTHA (Bursar): 0823591136  
School no. 033 7021257  
Note: This is a Faithway fundraiser.



**SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG COMMUNITY TOURISM ORGANISATION**

With **Splashy Fen** just weeks away, the Southern Drakensberg is preparing for the unmistakable energy the festival brings to our district. We look forward to welcoming long-standing, loyal visitors, those who have had Splashy on their bucket list for years, and first-time festivalgoers — who, if history is anything to go by, we know they will be back next year.

**Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD)** remains a serious concern in our region. Agriculture, alongside tourism, is one of the largest sources of employment in the district. As a community, we must prioritise safe and sustainable tourism practices. This includes ensuring that we and our guests are well informed, guided by verified facts, and mindful not to spread misinformation.

**Festival organisers have confirmed the following biosecurity measures:** “All vehicles will be treated at the Underberg Country Club and receive a sticker indicating that they have been disinfected. This will allow them to proceed onto the Bushman’s Nek Road. Vehicles without a sticker will be processed at the spray point at the Bushman’s Nek turnoff (both turnoffs).”

The Southern Drakensberg Community Tourism Organisation (SDCTO) continues to encourage event organisers to include the CTO in planning meetings to avoid miscommunication and to strengthen collaboration. Our recently established Events Subcommittee is already engaging with CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation SA and the Sunflower Sky Hike in support of upcoming events, offering contacts, guidance and assistance.

It is a busy and important time for the organisation. As SDCTO grows into the body our district needs, fundraising remains a key priority. There appears to be a misconception that the committee consists of “big players” serving their own interests. This is not the case. With the exception of Sphamandla, all committee members serve on a voluntary basis. If any sector or group feels underrepresented, members are encouraged to become involved. The strength of this organisation lies in its inclusivity and community spirit — values we are determined to protect.

Members are also encouraged to actively support tourism marketing efforts. We appeal to members to provide high-quality photos and short video clips to the Tourism Office for display on the Smart TV.

Updated pamphlets should be delivered for display. Important: there is no cost to members to advertise at the Tourism Office.

Members are asked to begin gathering pamphlets, branded mineral water and promotional items for the upcoming Easter Goody Bag campaign. Further details will be shared on the SDCTO Announcement WhatsApp group. If you would like to join the CTO or advertise as a member, please email [contact@drakensberg.org](mailto:contact@drakensberg.org)

Finally, we acknowledge and thank long-standing members Kevin and Alice McDonagh of Karmichael Farm Guesthouse. Active, vocal, sometimes challenging — but always passionate — their contribution to tourism and the broader community has been significant, particularly in matters relating to infrastructure and district development. As they prepare to relocate to the coast to be closer to their children, we wish them every success in this next chapter and express our sincere appreciation for the impact they have made in the Southern Drakensberg.

By Michelle Stevens



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As Sani Pharmacy proudly steps into a new era as Pharmacy at SPAR Sani, the commitment to accessible, quality healthcare within the community continues to grow stronger. The in-store clinic has recently welcomed an outstanding healthcare professional to its team, Sister Christine Shackelford, a registered nurse whose career spans nearly five decades. Registered since 1977, Sister Christine brings a depth of knowledge, experience, and dedication that few can match. With a strong background in paediatrics, she has spent much of her career caring for children and supporting families through every stage of early development. From routine wellness visits to more specialised care, her calm and compassionate approach has earned her trust across generations. Sister Christine's experience also extends internationally, having worked in both the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Exposure to diverse healthcare systems abroad has strengthened her clinical expertise and broadened the perspective she now brings back to the local community.



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## A Pass Less Travelled

By Don Guy

Most road signs on the Swartberg/Matatiele dirt road do not exist anymore but when you pass a lone sign to Kevelaer Mission you'll know you're on the right track. You're on the road to **Ramatsetiso's** gate, watch for an important right turn. Like the old days you'll stop and ask farmers and grader drivers - that helps but when at last you reach a steep concrete road that winds through runaway wattles - you've arrived. Lovely Protea's on the pass and spots to have lunch, we met two cars and they both stopped for a chat.

'Ja... die pad is bietjie sleg van hier af - jy gaan stadig ry.'  
... these the words of a 'Matat' contractor gently making his way home from a Lesotho job. He was right, but you'll make it with a sturdy bakkie. In just over 2hrs and a bit (135km) from Underberg you come to Ramatsetiso's Gate, the border post, surprise-surprise we paid no fees to be stamped into the Kingdom of Lesotho.



**Our first tourist attraction was the old abandoned Store at the border. Underberg's Mathew Wiggill served his trader apprenticeship there a long time ago (He was just out of his teens).** Walking through the ruins we imagined the buzz more than half a century ago. In those days the trader was a jack of all trades, barter was the name of the game, wool for goods and this brokered by the trader. We'd both visited Lesotho with Mathew before - rich stories around every corner - I hope he writes it all down! There is a fantastic, Chinese invested, tar road from there. Turn right for Sehlabatebe, drive for 40km on this, then turn off to the right into Sehlabatebe.

In the past, we'd hiked up to **Schlabathebe** from Bushman's Nek police post and I'd travelled to the park on media business several times - what a spot! I especially recall flying over beautiful ox bows, and recording winding wetlands for a media bite on the official ceremony at Chief Jonathans lodge about 25 years back. On that occasion it had functional toilets, running water and a roaring fire to keep the likes of elderly guest Anton Rupert and the chief warm. I won't forget the huge bear hug Greg Stewart the rangeland co-ordinator for the Maluti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project gave his Lesotho counterpart when he stepped out of the official Helicopter. A few months later Greg would die while ice climbing in the Sani pass.

Our aim this time was to camp but as we found the old lodge abandoned we squatted there in the main bedroom. The next day we hiked on paths to sleep at **Tarn Cave** It takes you through spectacular rock formations and 'Motebo's' (herder shelters) dysfunctional since the 1970's when the Park attained formal status. The wild flowers are spectacular especially the orchids and proteas. **The views of the Knuckles and down to Bushman's Nek are breath taking! GO THERE.**



**Don and Helen Guy are local guides with a particular interest in Rock Art - they hike the Southern Drakensberg and know it's natural history, they can tell you it's story. WhatsApp 066 0186430 to start a conversation about group rates.**



Keren Fricke and her boys hiked the Rhino peak a couple of weeks back. **I thought her youngest son Mitch who is only 7 must be the youngest to hike up Rhino.**

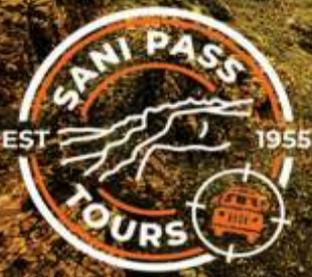
Please see attached photo. May be worth a mention in Mountain Echo because it is quite an achievement.

Her sons are  
Mitch 7  
Ivan 10  
Ansel 12

Kind Regards  
Kathy Tedeschi



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## BIRDING IN THE SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG

By Stuart McLean



On 22 December, Aldo Berruti saw and photographed a Cape Weaver with a ring. As he mentioned, with no ringing here since Steven Piper, that would make this bird about 13 or 14 years old — a very respectable

age for a weaver! We've also had some unusual visitors for the district. Bart Fokkens spotted a Pink-backed Pelican at Wilson's Dam on 22 December — our third record for the area. Previously, John and Gayle Ellison saw two at Ottermere Dam and more recently Doug Armstrong's driver photographed one on Goxhill near the Himeville Nature Reserve.

Bart also reported a black morph Jacobin Cuckoo at Splashy Fen — only a handful around this year — along with a couple of pied morph sightings on Sani Pass. Pam Ellenberger recorded a Lesser Spotted Eagle on the Loteni road on 4 February, our only record this season. I also saw, for the first time in Lesotho, the Black-headed Canary morph (formerly known as the Damara Canary).

Glen McLean reported the only Common Cuckoo at Sani Top on 19 January. Chris Kelly sent a photo of a White-backed Vulture from the Mzimkulu Vulture Hide on 20 January. Helga and I saw a Lesser Moorhen at Ottermere Dam on 27 January.

I spotted a Lilac-breasted Roller in the Swamp Nature Reserve — only the fourth record in many years, the most recent being Athol and Di Sanders' sighting two years ago on Hamstead Farm near Splashy. Bart has also seen several Honey Buzzards around Pondokkie near Splashy Fen, including one stunning pale morph. On one occasion, a Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk was harassing a Honey Buzzard and I saw one bothering Drakensberg Rockjumpers on the switchbacks.

There have been a few Amur Falcons about, and we've managed to see all three species. The first Amurs were noted in late December by Kevin Fraser. I saw a female Red-footed Falcon among a group of Amurs at Ndlazila Stream on the Bushman's Nek road on 12 January and Bart has since reported several more, with birds again roosting near Wilson's Dam. Interestingly, Bart found a few wings below the roost — a sure sign that a predator has been taking advantage of the gathering. I also saw a female Lesser Kestrel on lower Sani on 9 February.

Striped Pipit remains a tricky bird locally. Wally Walker photographed one in a Eucalyptus near Creighton on 8 February, and Glen's guest photographed another in a pine tree at Xumeni the same day. My own encounters have been limited to the odd bird at Hella Hella and one heard in Marutswa.

Finally, a record I've been chasing for years — and may never repeat — was seeing all three local Flufftail species in a single day! Buff-spotted Flufftails have bred in our garden three times in the past, often staying for months while raising chicks, so it's rather ironic that I achieved this in a season when they didn't breed with us. We started at Mkomazana, where Glen had located a responsive Buff-spotted in a dark, gloomy hedge — the guest just managed a photo of the male. The Striped Flufftail appeared on the lower Sani vlei, popping out exactly where we were about to sit! Once we had seen the Striped — real skulkers — I felt the triple was truly possible. The Red-chested was calling in a wetland on the Pevensey road; five birds were vocalising, but only one ventured into view.

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With the foot and mouth causing havoc all around our country, sadly our town was not spared. This affected fishing in a very bad way as many of the dams around the area located on private farms were temporarily closed to help prevent spread of this disease. The closure of water as well as the heatwaves we have had recently did not do well to the fishing either with very few reports of fish being caught and anglers catching had some hard sessions. Good idea for the Underberg/Himeville fishing club to close the dams still available to fish due to the heat. This is better on the fish as the heat increases mortality of the fish caught.

And by closing water until better conditions, allow for some recovering of the fish after warm Months and help relieve some of the stress of the fish with no angling pressure. If all goes well these dams will reopen March. Reports from anglers fishing resorts also indicate heat to be a problem as fish caught were deep and not eager in taking fly. The cooler days recently improved it a little and with Autumn on our doorstep I am sure fishing will pick up. And hoping for good reports once fishing reopens.

On a brighter note. The frequent rain have kept the rivers flowing clean and strong. We have had some very good fishing conditions on many of the local rivers for some time now. The lower reaches of the Umzimkulu beats a little discolored after storms but cleans up quick in a couple days. Some very hard days of fishing and reports of few fish around the only down side when talking to the river anglers fishing the lower beats. Mixed reports on many of the other rivers as some days produced very good fishing while other days the same rivers seemed empty of fish. Sulking and for some reason not willing to eat a fly. There are a lot of small fish around and anglers are reporting to see them all over. Plenty around the 20cm mark. A good sign for the future if the weather plays along. Moving further up into the river systems the chances of hooking into a fish become somewhat better. Weighted nymphs fished under dries or with indicators worked well in getting fish to the net with the higher water we have been having lately. Dry fly fishing also did well with some good reports on fish caught on dries on some of the rivers more so high up on these systems where levels drop faster after rains. As the warmer season almost to the end lets hope for some bigger fish to be netted as temperatures cool down.

**Underberg Flyfishing and lifestyle centre at The Clocktower Centre.** -  
Contact 0832286707 or 0655232877  
Duane Vaughn Howell  
Check out our website at [uhtfc.org](http://uhtfc.org)

## TROUT FISHING

By Duane Vaughn Howell + Photo

Country cafe and Phuzabooba Bar

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## Grant “Thatch” Trollope Bids Farewell to Active Duty

Sani Round Table 152 bids a bittersweet farewell to Thatch, a stalwart member who’s served 18 incredible years with our Round Table family. As Grant turns 40, he’s finally getting his tie axed and joins the Sani 41’ers, marking the end of an era. Grant’s dedication, warm smile, and can-do spirit have made him an integral part of our community. His never-say-no attitude has inspired us all, and his love for a cold beer (or two) has made him a legend among peers. **Grant will be embarking on an Honorary Year with Round Table**, so his riveting stories and infectious enthusiasm will still ring through the Round Table meetings. His contributions to Sani and the wider community have not gone unnoticed, and we’re extremely grateful for his tireless service. Cheers, Grant, for being an amazing teammate and friend! Your legacy will live on, and we’ll raise a pint to that! **Yours in Table, Bud Manthe** (Bud was also axed on the night and given an honorary year)

## What a year it has been for Sani Round Table 152!

In 2025, Sani152 proudly completed 55 projects, contributing an incredible 1,450 man-hours in service to our community, raising just over R900 000 and distributing over R650 000 back into the district. This achievement is a true reflection of teamwork, commitment, and heart. None of this would have been possible without our strong team, our Legs, dedicated guests, 41ers, MOTHS, and every volunteer who stepped up to make a difference. Your ongoing support fuels everything we do. To our community — thank you for believing in us, supporting us, and trusting us to serve. It is a privilege to be part of meaningful change. As we look ahead to 2026, we are excited for the challenges and successes that lie ahead. We are proud to announce the 2026 Committee (See Photo):

- Chairman: Michael Beghin
  - Vice Chairman: Gerhard van Zyl
  - Treasurer: Tian Keet
  - IRO & PRO: Matt Hayes
  - Secretary: Stef Swart
  - Sergeant: Johan Engelbrecht
  - Directory: Sean Denysschen
- Here’s to another year of impact, growth, and service. Together, we continue to make a difference.  
Yours In Table  
Michael Beghin

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Thatch received the Long Service Noggs Newman Medal from Round Table Southern Africa at their AGM dinner held at The Protea Pantry on the Bushmansnek road on Saturday 21 February. Here he is with his wife Rowena



## A Toast to Community, and to Table

**By Matt Hayes (Natal South Coast area Chairman of Round table)**  
Tonight, we gather not just around tables, But because of one. A place where boots are muddy, Hearts are big, And a quick wave on a gravel road can mean more than a thousand words. This is Underberg. Where the mountains don’t just stand tall — They remind us too. Where rivers teach patience, The seasons teach humility, And the weather teaches us...To always be ready for all four seasons in one day. This is a town where neighbours become family, Where help arrives before it’s asked for, And where community isn’t something you talk about — It’s something you live. And it’s because of this place, Because of these people ,That we are able to do what we do as Round Tablers. You see, Round Table doesn’t exist in isolation. It only works when a community allows it to. When people trust us. Support us. Challenge us. And gently remind us when our enthusiasm might be running slightly ahead of our planning. We table for this community. For the schools, the families, the kids, The causes that matter quietly but deeply. We table knowing that behind every project, Every fundraiser, Every late night and early morning — There is a town that shows up. A town that buys the ticket, Donates the prize, Volunteers the time, And cheers us on —Even when they’re not entirely sure what a “Tabler” actually is. And maybe that’s the magic. That Round Table isn’t about titles or traditions, But about service with sleeves rolled up, Friendship built over fires, And leadership that listens first. So tonight, we say thank you. To Underberg —For your beauty, your generosity, your humour, And for allowing us the privilege Of serving something bigger than ourselves. May we always be worthy of this place. May we continue to give more than we take. And may our tables always be surrounded By good people, good purpose, And just enough chaos to keep it interesting. Ladies and gentlemen, friends and neighbours — Please raise your glass To community, To service, To friendship, And to Round Table Southern Africa. To Table. **By Matt Hayes**

(Editor’s Note, I liked Matt’s speech so much that I asked him to send it to me for printing)  
Here he is with his wife Sarah



## PEVENSEY PLACE SPREADS LOVE IN FEBRUARY



**Valentines Jacques Nel and Marissa Niemand**  
Residents of Pevensey Place turned up the heat this Valentine’s Day with a “finger-licking” supper, dancing and a whole lot of love in the air. The special celebration was a hit, with everyone enjoying the festive atmosphere. Earlier in the month Pevensey Place also took part in the Midmar Mile, and wata a performance! Swimmers put in the hard yards, trained tirelessly, and it paid off with a successful completion of the challenging mile swim. Kudos to the following participants – Luke, Alison, Grace, Celeste, Graeme, Chloe, Nicolas, Glen and Cara, another win for Pevensey Place! Thank you to Swim Chicks, Trish Anderson, Christian Steyl-Lacey, Kath Boast and not to forget Pevensey’s dedicated Staff. Kind regards Nadine Bruigom Bookkeeper/SEC-RETARY

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## Community Threads: Cathy Knox Inspires at Country Women Meeting

By Reine Combrinck



Hailing from the serene landscapes of Underberg, multi-media artist Cathy Knox brought scholarly elegance and creative inspiration to the recent gathering of Country Women. With a rich academic background—including a Master’s degree in English Literature focused on Shakespeare and a Fine Arts degree from UKZN—Cathy has spent over two decades exploring the intersection of story, humour, and visual beauty.

On February 4th, she shared her profound belief in the healing power of art with the local group, offering an intimate look at her journey through the medium of quilting. Cathy provided expert insight into the evolving trends of the quilting industry, illustrating how needle and thread can weave together history, personal narrative, and modern expression. For Cathy, the artistic process begins with the persistent whisper of “what if?” She views curiosity as the vital spark that invites inspiration to surface, transforming fleeting thoughts into something special. She is, however, quick to remind us that true creative evolution demands a disciplined investment of time and spirit and being open to the world of inspiration around us.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, quilting has transformed from a steady traditional craft into a thriving multi-billion dollar industry, with its global market value projected to reach approximately \$5 billion by 2027, according to CraftIndustryAlliance.org. While the industry has long maintained a dedicated base of 9 to 11 million participants, the pandemic acted as a major catalyst for growth, introducing a surge of new practitioners. This era saw the rise of the “Cottagecore” aesthetic, which drew Millennial and Gen Z demographics toward quilting as a means of digital detox, wellness, and sustainable self-expression.

Today, nearly 18% of quilters are newcomers to the craft—a significant increase from pre-pandemic levels—and they are increasingly leveraging technology, using platforms like YouTube and Instagram for education and modernising the hobby through digital design tools and vibrant, non-traditional patterns. Despite recent economic pressures like inflation, the industry remains resilient, characterised by a permanent shift toward online shopping and a renewed cultural appreciation for handmade, heirloom-quality goods.

Cathy Knox’s presentation served as a poignant reminder that while the quilting world expands into a high-tech, multi-billion dollar industry, its heart remains rooted in the quiet, personal act of creation. Ultimately, Cathy’s journey encourages us all to embrace our own curiosity, the investment of time and curiosity is what truly allows us to weave our own stories into the fabric of the world.

**Country Women meet at 10am on the first Wednesday of every month. Contact Reine for more information 076 444 4207.**

## My journey with Music for Change

by Qetelo Phera

When Music for Change first started, I did not know how meaningful the journey would become. At the beginning, it was something new and unfamiliar, and I was not sure what to expect. I only knew that it was an opportunity to sing and to be part of something different. Now I can see that it is becoming much more than that.

We only practice on Saturdays, which means our time together is limited. Sometimes it feels like there is not enough time to learn everything properly — the songs, the harmonies, and how to sing as one choir. But even with that little time, something special is growing. Being part of the Music for Change Choir is not only about singing. It is about commitment. Even though we practice only once a week, everyone shows up willing to learn and try their best. Saturdays have become something to look forward to. We are learning to use our time wisely, to focus, and to support one another. Music is slowly becoming a safe space where we can express ourselves and feel more confident.

At first, many of us were shy. Some of us were unsure of our voices and afraid of making mistakes. With such limited practice time, mistakes do happen — but instead of giving up, we are learning patience. We are discovering that progress does not always come quickly, but it comes when you keep showing up. Our teachers believe in us and remind us that growth takes time, even when time is short.

Through Music for Change, I am learning discipline and teamwork. Singing together teaches us how to listen to one another and how to blend our voices instead of trying to stand out alone. Music brings us together in a way words sometimes cannot. It helps us connect, support each other, and feel united. Truly, music is a universal language.

The performance evening was a moment when everything came together. Standing in front of parents and community members felt emotional and powerful. Many parents were seeing their children perform for the first time since rehearsals began in August. Even though we had practiced only on Saturdays, we stood confidently and sang from our hearts. Seeing the smiles, pride, and emotion in the room made every rehearsal worth it.

What makes the experience even more special is the sense of community. Teenagers from Clouds of Hope who have moved on to Halfway House support the event behind the scenes — serving food, taking orders, and helping with the cleanup. Their involvement shows that Music for Change is about more than music — it is about growth, responsibility, and giving back.

From my side, Music for Change is helping me grow as a person. It is giving me confidence and a stronger voice. When I look around the room and see people smiling, I feel proud — proud of myself, proud of the choir, and proud to be part of something meaningful.

Music for Change is more than a choir. It is a journey of learning, unity, and hope — and the journey is still continuing.

Written by Qetelo Phera  
Picture Sihle Gnarlis




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# SANI COMMUNITY FORUM

# HIMEVILLE-UNDERBERG GARDEN CLUB 18 MARCH

BY: DI SUNTER

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR A WATER USE LICENSE RENEWAL FOR THE EXISTING FARM DAM AND IRRIGATION ON THE FARM CLARKTON 11 FS NEAR SWARTBERG, GREATER KOKSTAD LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE (DWS REF: WU47987).

**Project Introduction**  
Fettercairn Farm Land Trust has lodged an application for the renewal of the existing Water Use License (WUL) for the storage and taking of water in terms of Section 22 of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) and the relevant Regulations, as amended. The continued use of the dam for storage and irrigation on the farm will require the renewal of the existing WUL (B191/2/1850/27). The water uses will include the taking of water from the dam for irrigation on Clarkton farm, the continued storage of water in the in-stream dam, 2 pumphouses along the boundary of the dam and associated farming activities within the regulated area of a watercourse.

**Public Participation Process**  
As part of the Public Participation Process (PPP), as contemplated in section 24J of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) read with chapter 6 of the EIA regulation, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017 as well as Chapter 10 of the Water Use Licensing Regulations, 19 May 2023; any person who is interested in and affected by the mentioned project is hereby invited to participate by registering as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP). Please register your details, interests, comments, issues, questions, and/or concerns regarding the proposed project in writing to the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) at the contact details given below. The public participation period will take place from Friday, 27 February 2026, through to Monday, 04 May 2026 (60 days, excluding public holidays). All information will be available from an electronic file share link that will be provided to all I&APs upon registration. For those parties who does not have access to electronic services, a hard copy can be made available upon request. For any additional queries please contact the EAP below.

**Environmental Assessment Practitioner contact details**  
Wiesenberg Advisory | Hilton, KwaZulu Natal, 3201  
Mrs. Jeanne-Louise Wiese | Tel: 073 163 6409 | Email: [wiesenbergadvisory@gmail.com](mailto:wiesenbergadvisory@gmail.com)  
**ISAZISO SOKUBAMBISANA KOMPHAKATHI UKUVUSELELWA KWELAYISENSI YOKUSETSHENZISWA KWAMANZI EDAMBU ELIKHONA NOKUNISELA EPULAZINI E-CLARKTON 11 FS DUZE NE-SWARTBERG, KUMASIPALA WASE-KOKSTAD ENKULU, ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL (DWS REF: WU40485).**

**Isingeniso Sephrojekthi**  
I-Fettercairn Farm Land Trust ifake isicelo sokuvuselelwa kweLayisense Yokusetshenziswa Kwamanzi ekhona (WUL) yokugcina nokuthathwa kwamanzi ngokweSigaba 22 soMthetho Wamanzi Kazwelonke (Act 36 of 1998) kanye neMithethonqubo efanele, njengoba ichtshiyelwe. Ukuqhubeka nokusetshenziswa kwedamu ukugcina nokuniselela epulazini kuzodinga ukuvuselelwa kwe-WUL ekhona (B191/2/1850/27). Ukusetshenziswa kwamanzi kuzobandakanya ukuthathwa kwamanzi edamini ukuze achelelwe epulazini laseClarkton, ukuqhubeka nokugcinwa kwamanzi edamini elingaphakathi komfudlana, izindlu zokumpompa amanzi ezi-2 ngasemngceleni wedamu kanye nemisebenzi yokulima ehambisana nayo endaweni elawulwayo yomfula.

**Inqubo Yokubambiqhaza Komphakathi**  
Njengengxenywe yoHlelo Lokubamba Iqhaza Komphakathi (PPP), njengoba kuhlangozwe esigabeni 24J soMthetho Kazwelonke Wokuphathwa Kwemvelo (Act 107 of 1998) ofundwe nesahluko 6 somthethonqubo we-EIA, 7th April 2017 kanye neSahluko 10 seMithethonqubo Yelayisense Yokusetshenziswa Kwamanzi, 19 May 2023; Noma yimuphi umuntu onentshisekelo nohintekayo kule phrojekthi eshiwo uyamenywa ukuba abambe iqhaza ngokubhalisa njengeQembu Elithakaselayo nelithintekayo (I&AP). Sicela ubhalise imininingwane yakho, okuthakaselayo, ukuphawula, izingqinamba, imibuzo, kanye/noma okukukhathazayo mayelana nephrojekthi ehlongozwayo ngokubhalisa uMsebenzi Wokuhlola Imvelo (EAP) ngemininingwane yokuxhumana enikezwe ngezansi. Isikhathi sokubamba iqhaza komphakathi sizoqala ngoLwesihlanu, mhla 27 February 2026, kuze kube 4 May 2026 (izinsuku ezingama-60, ngaphandle kwamaholide). Lonke ulwazi luzotholakala kusixhumanisi sokwabelana ngefayela le-elektronikhi elizonikezwa wonke ama-I&APs lapho kubhaliswa. Kulawo maqembu angakwazi ukufinyelela ezinsizeni ze-elektronikhi, ikhophi egciniwe ingenziwa itholakale uma icelwa. Ngeminye imibuzo eyengeziwe sicela uthinte i-EAP ngezansi.  
**Imininingwane yokuxhumana Nomsebenzi Wokuhlola Imvelo**  
Wiesenberg Advisory | Hilton, KwaZulu Natal, 3201  
Mrs. Jeanne-Louise Wiese | Tel: 073 163 6409 | Email: [wiesenbergadvisory@gmail.com](mailto:wiesenbergadvisory@gmail.com)



“WITHOUT A SENSE OF CARING, THERE CAN BE NO SENSE OF COMMUNITY.” ANTHONY J. D’ANGELO.  
SANI COMMUNITY FORUM SUPPORT AND THANKS. We remain indebted to Stu Little and the Splashy Fenn Team, for directing their generous donation of over half a ton of Tastic Rice to us, which we continue to distribute. A heartfelt thank you is extended, once again, to Underberg Dairies, Tastic Rice, and Imzamo Marketing Amanzimtoti for their generous support and collaboration of the rice, which allows us to assist those in need in our community. Without this kindness and generosity, as too the value of the extensive groundwork conducted by concerned residents in identifying worthy recipients, our reach would be severely stunted. Thank you.  
WINTER APPEAL: Autumn is rapidly approaching, heralding in the stark reminder that the bitter cold will be cruel and relentless, to those in need. Please can we reach out to our kind and generous residents and supporters, to start to knit or crochet, blankets or beanies, or even donate your gently worn winter clothing that “might not fit!” We all have those items that we hang onto for the “might fit sometime” days. Some of our Residents need your help, today. Any donations, or your knitted articles, can be dropped off with Arthie Singh, at Agrimark (the old Forge Agri) which is opposite the People’s Park. A big thank you to Arthie, for managing this SCF endeavour. Our SCF Account at Spar, is another way that you can donate to help those less fortunate with food parcels, knowing that your donations will reach the envisioned recipient. Thank you.  
SCAMS: Once again, the Scam Artists are active with messages being received by Residents, purporting to be Dr NDZ Municipality Officials, who are on their way to disconnect your services, for unpaid accounts. This is usually accompanied by a photo of hypothetical employees working on a utility services box or meter, the origin of which, appears to be the City of Johannesburg. Firstly, Dr NDZ Municipality is not a Service Delivery enterprise for our water, which is pre-paid, in any event. Secondly, our Electricity supply is a direct contract between the Resident and Eskom, and it is not delivered through the Municipality. What is concerning as regards this scam, is that these Scam Artists are in possession of Resident’s Contact details and their address. If you are in any doubt as to the authenticity of any correspondences received similar to this scam, please contact the Municipality directly.  
SERVICE DELIVERY: It must be election year with the emergence of some Councillors from the woodwork, appearing to be concerned with streetlights. This is despite SCF giving the Councillors all the details over two years ago, compiled by Residents themselves. How much effort does it take for a Councillor to drive around at night to check lighting? A year later, and the streetlight and pole by the Butchery remains broken and a danger to pedestrians. It also portrays an awful advert for an indifferent Dr NDZ Municipality, showcased at the entrance to the Village.

“WITHOUT A SENSE OF CARING, THERE CAN BE NO SENSE OF COMMUNITY.” ANTHONY J. D’ANGELO.  
SANI COMMUNITY FORUM SUPPORT AND THANKS. We remain indebted to Stu Little and the Splashy Fenn Team, for directing their generous donation of over half a ton of Tastic Rice to us, which we continue to distribute. A heartfelt thank you is extended, once again, to Underberg Dairies, Tastic Rice, and Imzamo Marketing Amanzimtoti for their generous support and collaboration of the rice, which allows us to assist those in need in our community. Without this kindness and generosity, as too the value of the extensive groundwork conducted by concerned residents in identifying worthy recipients, our reach would be severely stunted. Thank you.

Garden Club meets again on Wednesday 18 March 2026, this time in Felicity Oats’s garden situated in Links Road opposite the Underberg Country Club. The beautiful garden is meticulously maintained and features a combination of indigenous and exotic plantings, with many interesting nooks and crannies. Our speaker is Andrew Line, with the theme being “landscaping and preparing your garden for a special occasion”. So please do join us. The meeting starts at 10h00. Please remember to bring your own chairs and hats. The visitor’s fee is R30 and includes teas and eats.



Mural By Rob Leenhouders in Himeville

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Reference: Your Name / Spot

### TIDY TOWNS: BY RUTH CROUCH.

Hot February is already coming to an end, and we welcome the cooler Autumn days ahead. I fear that I tend to repeat the same thing ad nauseam, so I will make just a few comments and make more mention of specific folk and organisations which benefit Tidy Towns. I have tried to brighten the upper end of the village with the bright yellow and orange Cannas and the happy ongoing Marigolds. I am also trying to create an African theme with the tall earthen pots which I obtained from Arthur and Dilys Edgar, after their sale of all their beautiful garden features, prior to them leaving NUD. However, I do despair for all the many motorists who venture up the potholed ridden road on a daily basis. They must navigate through this minefield, past the Butchery, past Makhulu Shop, up to two Schools, the Doctors room, and two Churches, amongst other premises. We conducted a poll on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2024 and tallied up some 2342 vehicles that travelled up and down this section of road in the 12-hour period from 6am to 6pm! This is an astounding volume of vehicles to travel along this broken stretch of road. The small taxi rank with its unhinged and broken fences, accompanied by the damaged streetlamp and barrier rail that was crashed into by an intoxicated driver on the 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025, does not make for a good entrance into Underberg village. Sincere and grateful thanks to the following folk and organisations who donate monthly, which enables me to tackle some of the pressing Tidy Town issues, that we endeavour to fix or improve. The Simons, The Keywords, Jayne Greyling, Guy Greyling, Sophie Watson, The Wood family; Underberg Spar, Pam Golding Properties, The Stonehouse Kitchen; Round Table for their recent generous lump sum donation; Rod’s Engineering for kindly welding the labour rail onto the back of the vehicle I use for Tidy Town work. Also, to Superquick for giving me a discount on my battery. Mike Streatfield of Farmers Agricare, for generously donating weed pesticides; James St Pern for creating new Tidy Town signs; Piet Vermeer from Durban, who was so impressed by the improvement in NUD, that he gave a once off donation. Thank you to the Underberg Garden Club for a voucher to obtain plants etc. from Heritage Nursery. I have started revamping the rectangular garden bed opposite Agri Mart in the People’s Park and I will use that voucher for this area. I plan to do a Gum Boot Dance competition there again in April or May, as we did in 2024. Hopefully, more organisations will enter a team, as I know the Magma guys are keen on a win! How about it, Sani Round Tablers? In closing I was very encouraged to read the article in 19<sup>th</sup> February edition of The Natal Witness, whereby “The Keep Pietermaritzburg Clean” action group, launched a “Sweet Spot” contest to beautify ‘Maritzburg, to renew pride in the city, and prove that small acts of care can change the face of things. So please ‘Nudders’.... please come on board to help NUD. There are small pockets and some areas that need some TLC and your attention. So, if I ask you to help, please roll up your sleeves and do your bit for NUD. The most famous African Proverb regarding collaboration is: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” Individual action is usually quick, but with teamwork, community, and a dedicated and fruitful partnership with the Municipality, the sustainability, deeper progress and long-term success for Tidy Towns, can be achieved.



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## Plan to THRIVE in 2026

My general and underlying thesis is that AI (Artificial Intelligence) is bound to cause a lot of discomfort and displacement in the work force. AI assistants, Robots, Autonomous transport vehicles, courier and delivery services, to name just a few will lead to a dramatic reduction in the need for large work forces and labour markets.

So, what are the "workers" going to do? This huge and systemic shift will cause great social unrest and psychological scars if governments do not intervene, - well in fact they will have no choice but to come to the rescue. We will have what is basically a peace dividend (like after the great wars) but let's call it an AI productivity improvement dividend.

These employees will be eligible for compensation, retrenchment packages and government assistance - unemployment benefits and insurance payouts.

There will be many people with a sudden and extra amount of cash and it is not difficult to envision that many of them will want to enjoy some revenge travel.

And certainly, the Marriott and Hilton groups are best placed to take advantage of this continuing and emerging demographical change.

These companies are also great beneficiaries of the AI revolution. Hotels use machine learning to optimise dynamic pricing,

boosting RevPAR (Revenue per available room) by better anticipating demand and competitor pricing.

The AI models analyse booking patterns, events, weather, and macro data to adjust rates in real time - expanding margin capture with minimal manual input.

Both companies have asset-light, franchise and management fee-based business models.

Marriotts main brands are Marriott, Ritz-Carlton and Westin. The company has high-margin fee revenue from franchisers, a powerful loyalty programme (Bonvoy), excellent exposure to luxury and international markets and good brand diversification across price tiers.

Hilton has a "purer" asset - light structure. The main brands are Hilton, Waldorf Astoria, Conrad and DoubleTree. Hilton has a slightly smaller footprint but very high fee margins. The main advantages are great operating efficiency, a strong development pipeline, fantastic loyalty programme (Hilton Honors) and strong cash flow generation.

Over the past 10 years, Hilton has outperformed Marriott with an annualised return of 49.53%, while Marriot has yielded 19.4%. Both companies are worthwhile additions to a portfolio. Hilton is the preferred investment for growth - focussed investors, while Marriott offers a value - orientated opportunity at a lower price earnings multiple with unmatched global scale.

AI used William Meyer to write this article.

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**William Meyer - 0796244031**

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## Alcohol Recovery Programmes

Following on from last months article on Alcohol I wanted focus on the importance of a programme of recovery when one decides it's time to take a look at their alcohol intake. The main reason a programme is vital is simply because people drink due to insecurity, stress or emotional pain and those reasons are not going away because you stop drinking. The individual needs to take a look at themselves, their relationships and who they actually want to be if they have any chance of avoiding further runs ins with the most addictive and socialised drug on the planet.

One of the best programmes is the The 12 Step Programme and it's the simplest. It was pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in the 1930s and has become the global gold standard for treating various forms of addiction. At its core, the programme is a spiritual and psychological framework designed to help individuals achieve long-term sobriety. While the journey involves making amends and helping others, the entire structure rests on a single, daunting foundation: **Step One.**

Step One requires an individual to admit they are "powerless over alcohol" and that their lives have become "unmanageable". Within the recovery community, it is widely considered the most important—and most difficult—step. This is because it demands the total destruction of denial. To me, denial is the no.1 reason we stay addicted and denial takes many forms and is incredibly sneaky. Denial is a biological and psychological defense mechanism that convinces the addict they are still in control, even as their health, relationships, and careers crumble. Without a complete "surrender" at Step One, the remaining eleven steps are ineffective, as the individual is essentially trying to fix a problem they haven't fully acknowledged exists.

Sadly, the vast majority of people who attempt the programme fail at this initial stage. Many "slip" or relapse because they approach Step One without pausing long enough to really understand what it means to truly admit you have control. Most people will say "of course I know I have a problem - I have lost my job, my spouse has left me, my kids don't talk to me" so it seems pretty obvious there's a problem. However, they retain the secret belief that they might one day be able

to use alcohol or manage the problem through willpower.

When a person fails to "concede to their innermost self" that they are truly powerless, they are building a house on sand. For those who can truly master Step One, the path to a transformed life finally becomes possible.

Building on the absolute honesty of Step One, the remaining 11 steps of the Programme provide a structured path from surrender to spiritual awakening.

It's definitely worth Googling the 12 steps and there are many resources available. It's important though if you have a problem with alcohol that you seek out your doctor or a mentor (such as in AA) who can help guide and advise. Alcohol causes a lot of chaos and it's really important to get support.

Recently there has been a number of really cool booze alert Apps that are useful for making contact with others, tracking your progress and getting a virtual support. They do not replace real people but they can be a nice reminder and a source of encouragement.

In any recovery programme doing a Step 1 is always the beginning of building a foundation of hope.

Next Month we will delve deeper, looking at Rehab and some of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century treatments for alcohol.



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## FAITHWAY COLLEGE HIMEVILLE

We hosted the athletic trials for six schools from our ward. Four of our athletes qualified for the next round at Bhambatha and from there Taariq Peters made it through for the following round at Ixopo.

Our Foundation Phase learners were excited, and slightly nervous at first, when Berg Security brought some of their dogs for a display. They were amazed by the skills and obedience of the dogs.

The Intermediate Phase visited the Himeville Police Station and the Himeville Museum. It was an informative and enjoyable morning finding out how we are kept safe and discovering more of the history of our area.

The High School was treated to a Valentine's Dance by the hard-working Grade 11's. Despite several power outages in the area, plans were made and it was an enjoyable evening. The next day, learners dressed for Valentine's Day. The academics were curtailed to allow for song dedications, handing out of roses, dancing and other fun activities and events.

All in all, a busy time, but important as school has to be about more than only academics. **By Ian Van Der Merwe ( Headmaster)**



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3. The Whole Plant (The Habit): Step back! Show us the full view—is it a tiny ground-cover or a massive savanna tree, what is the shape of the trunk Color and texture of the bark

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Let's show the world how vibrant KwaZulu-Natal really is!

## SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG HONORARY OFFICERS

The month began with staff of Ezemvelo and Honorary Officers and a few people from the tour operators conducting a big clean-up on the Sani Pass ahead of the annual flower walk. A full bakkie load of all sorts of litter was removed. It is always disappointing to see how much gets thrown out of vehicles when it is so easy to take this back in a suitable receptacle in the vehicle and dispose of it responsibly. The rubbish is not only beside the road or in the drains but also among rocks a few metres from the road. At the same time as the clean-up another team set to work on cutting down or removing alien plants, like wattle saplings, and painting the stumps to prevent regrowth. The follow up on this latter job is always very important because these aliens have a habit of reproducing more after they have been cut back.

Our member, Kevin Fraser has put a great deal of work into producing an easily used field guide booklet identifying the alien invasive plants in this district. It will be available very soon and I recommend all people concerned about this threat to our indigenous species to buy a book. For those who do not know which plants are invasive this publication is essential to have for your information.

The Honorary Officers have now been given a certificate from SARS allowing all donations to be tax deductible. For more information on this contact Simon Acutt, our chairman (082 624 3670).

By Rosanne Clark



### Veld and vlei

By doncguy 59@gmail.com

### Environmental Lore and Conscience.

I did a course in one semester. Actually it was entitled Agricultural law, unfortunately I cannot recall much about it which goes to prove that; 'Education is what is remains when all that has been learnt has been forgotten'

That was one of my maternal Grandmothers favourite quips. On a practical level I learnt much more from working for 20 yrs for the environmental TV channel 50/50 .In those days the programme fielded reels of faxes sent from folk complaining about a neighbour or a developer violating environmental protocol. I recall incidents some rather confrontational, especially when filming the violation of wetlands. 'It's

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my land I can do what I like - get off my land!' Followed by lawyers letters . Actually in those days (now gone) these sorts of reactions were good for TV and we had our own media lawyers who could save our skin. Alas I am in my twilight years regards the media but that doesn't mean to say I don't take notice of the landscape. Any road trip is a 'landuse' feast for the eye .I'm forever looking to see how close crops are planted to waterways and if when historical timber is felled the 32m rule from a wetland buffer zones are corrected, I have a heavy heart when the fast depleting veld changes to maizeland, it's in my DNA. In Underberg farming land since I've known has gone through phenomenal changes. Cropping for one has become very viable. Agricultural consultants are in huge demand with applications to change land use. Three decades ago timber companies eyed out the land for plantations alas many a permit was awarded, farms were sold and the districts mixed farming potential shrank. Since those days dairy has boomed, actually 'gobbling up' the land on it's periphery, neighbouring farms are acquired to satisfy demands for ever expanding herds. Unsurprisingly now leased land in demand by extensive beef enterprises is locally in short supply.

What makes Underberg and it's vicinity high in value are the water resources. In reality wetlands are forever dammed for storage and rivers are pumped for irrigation. There are regulations in place to check the extent, local bodies monitor and that's a good thing. Beyond the rule book there is that age old notion of conscience. An ingrained environmental conscience is required to farm sustainably and responsibly there are some great examples of sound planning in the district, they should be recognized and lauded. For my 'thrupence ha' penny' I laud the farms that have trails running through them often along the river banks between cropping land and the river reserve. Done properly this has multiple outcomes , a recreational and farm tourist opportunity, the security aspect and a riverine biodiversity buffer between cropping and streams and rivers.

**Don Guy is a filmmaker artist and commentator of historical, social and environmental matters, he writes regularly for the Mountain Echo.**

# Understanding the Declaration of Foot and Mouth Disease as a National Disaster

- 13 February 2026

## FMD ICC

INDUSTRY COORDINATION COUNCIL

The declaration of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) as a National Disaster marks a significant and necessary step in responding to the current outbreak and the risk it poses to

South Africa's livestock sector, food security, rural livelihoods and export markets.

This declaration does not mean that the situation is out of control. Rather, it enables government to respond with greater speed, coordination and resource alignment. It provides the legal framework to mobilise additional resources, coordinate national and provincial efforts, streamline procurement of vaccines and biosecurity materials, and strengthen cooperation between agriculture, trade, policing, transport and disaster management authorities.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. While it does not pose a food safety risk to humans, its economic impact is severe. Outbreaks result in movement restrictions, loss of export status, market disruptions and significant financial strain across the value chain.

### What This Declaration Is - and What It Is Not

It is important to clarify that the classification of FMD as a *National Disaster* is **not the same** as the National State of Disaster declared during Covid-19 under section 27 of the Disaster Management Act. We are **not** currently in a section 27 National State of Disaster.

This means: The declaration does **not** automatically introduce wide-ranging regulatory powers through Directives similar to those seen during Covid-19.

It does **not** ipso facto impose nation-wide livestock movement bans. It does **not** override existing legislation governing animal disease control.

It does **not** authorise private individuals to exercise enforcement powers outside the law.

Movement control remains regulated in terms of the **Animal Diseases Act**, including:

Section 9 — movement control declarations issued by the Minister.

Section 3 — appointment of "Authorised Persons".

Section 4 — delegation of enforcement powers to such authorised persons.

Accordingly: Movement restrictions must still be declared in accordance with the Animal Diseases Act.

Farmers may not erect gates across public roads, conduct stop-and-search operations, or enforce movement controls unless properly authorised in law.

Enforcement powers remain vested in duly appointed and authorised officials.

The National Disaster classification supports coordination and resource mobilisation, but it does not bypass the statutory framework already governing animal disease control.

Similarly, farmers, feedlots and dairies may not independently procure and administer vaccines for voluntary, pre-emptive vaccination unless and until the Minister enacts a scheme under section 10 of the Animal Diseases Act and the necessary notices are gazetted.

The declaration therefore strengthens coordination and urgency - but it does not replace or suspend existing legal requirements.

### The Primary Purpose of the Declaration

The National Disaster declaration is intended to:

Intensify and coordinate disease containment and control measures.

Protect South Africa's remaining disease-free areas and restore export market access.

## THINK OF HORSES NOT ZEBRAS

By Llew Evans  
retired vet



I recently wrote an article trying to summarize the situation regarding Foot and Mouth Disease. About a week later just after I had said we had no locally produced vaccine there appeared in a newspaper an article saying Onderstepoort had produced its first 12000 doses after 20 years of non production. At first I was embarrassed then I thought "Why did it take a national disaster like this to kick start the vaccine production facility into action?" It is a bit like putting a crank handle into the old tractor parked under the trees at John and Sue Little's farm.

Onderstepoort is a dot on the map about '10km north of Pretoria. It is in 2 halves, divided by the main road heading north. One side is the teaching facility where they train veterinary students. The other side is the research side which includes the vaccine production facility.

When I was a student It was world famous and exported vaccines all over Africa and the rest of the world. What went wrong? There are many unanswered questions that I am sure we will never hear the answers to.

Moving on... when I was thinking about the story of fixing the little gerbil's broken leg reminded me about another little critter - a tiny little white mouse. Do kids still keep them as pets? I know we did. This one had been running around the edge of the bath as his owner filled it with hot water - and he fell in!! They brought him to me with 4 very burned feet. Luckily though they responded to treatment. Somehow they forgot to give us courses in how the treat white mice at Onderstepoort back in the 1960's. Must have been an oversight. Talking of Onderstepoort we had a lecturer by the name of Dr Loveday. An ex DHS boy if I remember rightly (I knew I liked him!) One day he walked into the classroom and said "When you hear hoofbeats, think of horses not zebras." This bit of wisdom I later discovered was not original but it is very important for vets to remember. In other words, think of the obvious thing first.

I was recently phoned by someone about a duck that had become paralysed and could not walk anymore. What could be the cause? Very tough to figure out, especially over the phone. I have never seen the duck, never seen the diet or the living conditions.

The owner asked me could it be Marek's Disease? This is a viral condition that affects the muscles and causes internal cancer. Then she asked "Could it be egg bound?" I was doubtful, thought Marek's more likely. But she insisted "How do I find out if she is egg bound?" "Stick your finger up" was my reply. "You want me to do WHAT??" "What if I put my finger in the wrong hole??"

"No there is only one. You can't make a mistake."

Later "No it was only squishy in there. No egg." Welcome to my world.

Anyway we were still baffled and talked about possible antibiotics and cleaning out their very dirty pond. Instead she took the duck to a vet who does a lot of wildlife work. He took a lot of xrays and guess what? The poor thing had 2 broken legs. Now surprisingly birds are easy to operate on and their hollow bones heal very quickly. But this poor bird had also swallowed pieces of wire so they decided to euthanize her. Why swallow wire? Who knows - probably poor living conditions. As far as the broken legs were concerned this was probably caused by rough handling or attempts to escape from their enclosure.

To go back, think of a broken leg first before any fancy medical condition.

Years ago when I lectured to 4<sup>th</sup> year students at Onderstepoort I once asked this group if they were presented with a dog who could not eat or close its mouth properly, what could it be. Of course the obvious answers came first..broken jaw, bone stuck in its mouth, cancer, concussion and and and...

Then one young lady from the back of the class tentatively put up her hand and asked "What about Rabies?" Now that was the point of the question. She was absolutely right. Especially in the Northern Transvaal where there is a lot of rabies. Check the vaccination status FIRST!

Think of horses, not zebras.No wonder Northern Transvaal can't play rugby - there is too much thinking about zebras in their



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## FMD VACCINE SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION SHOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen at the FMD Indaba in August 2025 told Farmer's Weekly: "Countries like Brazil and Argentina have shown us that success is possible when all players work together." In Parliament, he confirmed the national strategy is "modelled after systems used in Brazil and Argentina." When Brazil was declared FMD-free this year, he held it up as proof that vaccination-to-freedom works, and that South Africa is on the same journey. In South America, there was never a single state supplier. Private biotech firms - Biogenesis Bagó, Boehringer Ingelheim, Ourofino, and others - competed openly to produce FMD vaccines. Governments set the quality standard and approved products. Industry met that standard and delivered. They moved early to high-potency oil-based vaccines that gave cattle six months or more of solid immunity, which meant a manageable twice-a-year vaccination calendar. For years South Africa has relied on water-based vaccines from the Botswana Vaccine Institute that washed out of the system in three to four months. In South Africa, for decades, the law effectively funnelled supply through one entity: Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP), a state-owned manufacturer. When OBP's ageing factory broke down - after failing to meet international Good Manufacturing Practice standards for over 13 years - the entire national supply stopped with no second supplier. The history of State owned enterprises in South Africa is a clear indication that private enterprise must step in everywhere it is needed.

The South American model is based on an open market, competitive supply and the state sets the standard. South Africa built a monopoly that collapsed. In Argentina, more than 300 local farmer-run health foundations bought vaccines directly from manufacturers, hired their own vaccinators, and managed the cold chain from factory to farm. The state veterinary authority, SENASA, didn't inject a single cow. It set the rules, audited the paperwork, and enforced compliance. In South Africa the paperwork remained on a desk to be signed until a national disaster was proclaimed.

## CONCERNS ABOUT THE R617 RESURFACING

Having travelled to the Southern Drakensburg frequently over the last 20 years, the latest effort at resurfacing the R617 is leaving a lot to be desired. I will list the various shortfalls in point form.

1. The lead on/off of the newly resurfaced sections are often so steep it creates a hazard in itself, and those that travel the route often, resort to driving on the wrong side of the road to avoid the ramps.

2. Strips that have been resurfaced are in most cases not painted for weeks if not months. Tourists and those not familiar with the road have no idea of when it is safe to overtake and more importantly when it is not!

3. The section of road just outside Underberg, where additional hard pack has simply been laid on top of the existing surface to the level of the top of the existing armco barrier! Where

has this ever been done before? If a vehicle leaves the road there is absolutely no protection and the vehicle will plummet down the embankment!

4. Travelling on the R617, is a lottery. There appear 30 haphazard and random very large rectangles of road surface that are removed and left sometimes for weeks at a time before being patched with a bit of tar, prior to the section being resurfaced. This leads to vehicles swerving to avoid these huge traps thereby increasing the risk of head on collisions.

With the above issues happening over a 60km stretch of the R617, one wonders what will happen over the forthcoming long weekends, and Easter weekend. It begs the question is this another cadre deployment of ill equipped and under qualified people being given work

that they are not qualified to do?

**I look forward to the response of the relevant departments involved in road maintenance and upgrading.**

Yours sincerely,

Warwick Schuurman

warwicks@netactive.co.za

???

South Africa has roughly 700 state-owned enterprises (SOEs) operating in key sectors like energy (Eskom), transport (Transnet), and telecommunications, acting as crucial drivers for development. However, many face severe financial distress, poor management, and corruption, prompting reforms toward a centralized shareholder model (SAMSOC) to improve oversight and performance

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**R3 300 000**

Enjoy tranquil smallholding living with uninterrupted views of the Southern Drakensberg mountain range. A scenic dam attracts birdlife and offers peaceful fishing. The double-storey home includes a ground-floor lounge, bedroom, bathroom and laundry. Upstairs features a kitchen, two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a lounge opening to enclosed and open balconies overlooking the water. Ideal as a retreat or income earner.

**DECEASED ESTATE - MUST SELL!**



**R230 000**

This 2376 sqm freehold vacant land stands in a pristine 9,25ha Country Estate. This land has uninterrupted and beautiful mountain and valley views. The estate has a perimeter fence and gated access. Build your very own country home and breathe in the fresh Drakensberg air!



**UNDERBERG - R 6 250 000**

3 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS | 2 GARAGES

This small farm (44 ha) has a spacious home and cottage in a beautiful garden with farm and mountain views. It is suitable for a variety of small-scale farming ventures.

**Paula Bullimore**  
+27 (0)79 491 0101  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC



**UNDERBERG - R 1 895 000**

2 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS | 2 GARAGES

Contemporary, low-maintenance home showcasing stunning Drakensberg views. Featuring two en-suite bedrooms and a light-filled open-plan living area, it's perfectly suited to a relaxed retired life.

**Jade Lloyd**  
+27 (0)72 194 2121  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC



**UNDERBERG - R 1 775 000**

3 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS | 1 CARPORT

Looking for escapism to the serene beauty of the Southern Drakensberg? This charming log cabin could be just what you are looking for, either as a charming getaway or a cozy home.

**Paula Bullimore**  
+27 (0)79 491 0101  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC



**UNDERBERG - R 1 395 000**

4 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS

Charming, thatched cottage tucked behind a garden wall, in a beautifully established garden and conveniently close to town. A peaceful country getaway, or comfortable permanent home.

**Sue Preston**  
+27 (0)84 880 8701  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC



**UNDERBERG - R 1 500 000**

3 BEDROOMS | 1 BATHROOM | 2 COVERED PARKING

Delightful cabin nestled in Scotston Valley, offering open-plan living, off-grid potential and lovely mountain views. An ideal choice for a peaceful escape or a smart investment.

**Jade Lloyd**  
+27 (0)72 194 2121  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC



**UNDERBERG - R 380 000**

VACANT LAND

Generously sized, sloping freehold stand on Hlogoma Mountain with sweeping mountain views, ideally located near the village of Underberg for your dream home or investment.

**Khwezi Ngcobo**  
+27 (0)73 381 3957  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC

**CONTACT OUR AGENTS**

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**SCAN FOR MORE LISTINGS**

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