

AUGUST SPECIALS



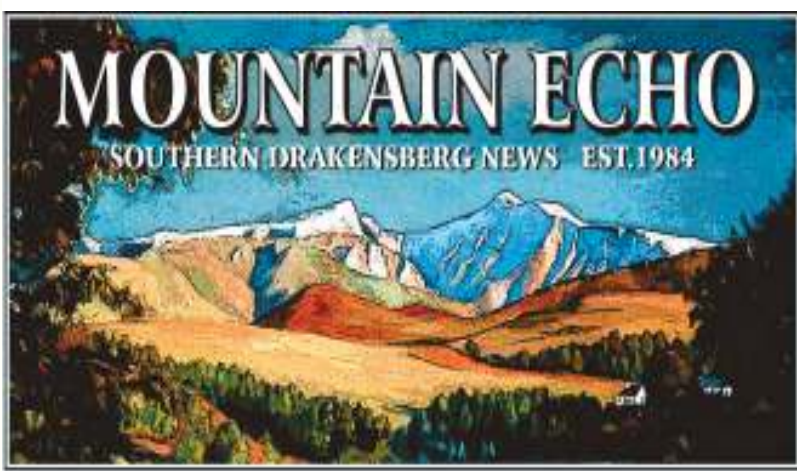
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FREE NEWSPAPER

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N3TC

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Thank you N3 TC for your loyal support, and understanding as Title Sponsor of The Drak Challenge over the past 13 years and helping our community once again with R190 000.

N3TC has been the title sponsor for the Drak Challenge since 2013 and has contributed significant financial benefits to many local organisations over the years and has stepped up again by giving our district R190 000 that was allocated for the **2026 N3TC DRAK CHALLENGE** to distribute to worthy causes. **Richard Jardine** of the Canyon Kayak Club was instrumental in asking N3TC if it was still possible to receive their sponsorship allocated for the **2026 N3TC DRAK CHALLENGE**. Chief operating officer of N3TC, **Thania Dhoogra** did not hesitate giving to our community once again. The Canyon Kayak Club is extremely excited, proud, and thankful to report that the N3TC has again provided a large sponsorship donation to the Club despite the cancellation of the Drak Challenge. These donation funds are to be distributed to 10 local organisations in lieu of benefits/income they normally would have generated from the Drak Challenge weekend.



I Caught Penny Mc Kenzie, Udetta Pretorius, Nicolas Rossouw and Trish Anderson hard at work in the White Elephant stall room for the **Pevensey Fete on 5 SEPTEMBER**

These organisations are: Underberg Primary School, Pevensey Place, Faithway School, Wattle Clearing Project, Sani Round Table, CHOC, Giants Cup Animal welfare, Southern Drak Honorary Officers, and Tidy towns.

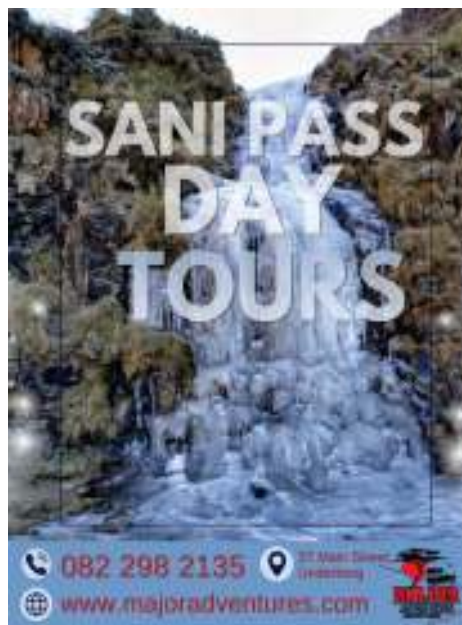
Once again, the N3TC has been a generous and very special sponsor to our community.

The relationship between the Underberg community and **Impi Live** is one that dates back for many years, back to 2008 when the Impi team became involved in the Drak Challenge.

Stu Berry, and Andrew van Rensburg (who lives in Underberg) have been the driving force behind all the commercial sponsorships that have come into the Drak Challenge.

From the early days of **Hansa** to **Global Trader**, and more recently the **N3TC**, their efforts with the Drak Challenge have brought in over R2m in sponsorship for the event to date. Combine that with the economic impact of Drak Challenge weekend (estimated at R34 million), and even more so the economic impact of **Splashy Fen** (estimated at R210 million), **Impi Live** have been a significant contributor to the economic development of the region, and off the back of that the significant contributions that both these events are able to make to community-based projects.

See page 3



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AUG 22

AUG 26

SEPT 4

SEPT 5

SEPT 12

SEPT 12

SEPT 16

SEPT 19

OCT 2 - 4

OCT 2 - 4

OCT 3

NOV 7 - 8

NOV 14

NOV 14

NOV 28

DEC 5

DEC 12

MOTHS fundraiser golf day @ Underberg Country Club. **R450 per player contact Ivan Reynolds 082 530 0935**

Quiz Night 6pm, Underberg Country Club R60 per person, teams of 4. **Contact Trish 0660033773**

Putt for a Purpose UEMS fundraiser@Underberg Country Club. **American Four Ball Scramble.Sponsorships & Entries: 072 486 6895**

Pevensey Place Fete @ Underberg Primary School **Contact Ilene van Dyk 082 925 7869**

FAB FAIR, live music and market stalls @Spiers Restaurant, Himeville. **Contact Michelle Pitman for a table.**

Swartberg Farmers Association Show @ZFA Showgrounds **contact Caela Fitch for stalls and info 0605060077 or zfa@zfa.co.za**

Garden Club Meeting @ Ilene & Terence van Dyk's garden in Himeville. Speaker, Amy Swart on azaleas, camelias and rhododendrons.

Rhino Peak Challenge to pledge/payment/entry, please email: rpc@africamassive.co.za

2026 UFA Agri & Lifestyle Show! @Underberg Farmers Association Showgrounds **contact admin@kznufa.co.za to book a stall**

UFA YOUTH SHOW @Underberg Farmers Association Showgrounds **contact Kim Fraser 0826590649**

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Underberg OPEN GARDENSon Underberg South, and Loopy Lane.**Follow us on Facebook for updates**

Sani Stagger info@Sanistagger.co.za

Underberg SUPERSPAR food and wine show

Himeville Museum Christmas Market @Himeville Museum contact **Kitt Du Preez 071 898 7892**

Sani Round Table Touch Rugby Tournament **contact Matt Hayes 0636828571**

Christmas Market @ The Local Collection **contact Lauren Perks 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 MeetingAlternate 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.

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SEPTEMBER 11

DISTRIBUTION DATE

SEPTEMBER 18



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Peta Parker Properties



WHY I'M CLIMBING RHINO PEAK





RHINO PEAK CLIMBFUNDRAISER

Lelani will be representing us by climbing up Rhino Peak in aid of raising funds for Giants Cup Animal Welfare. You can do your bit for this incredible establishment who selflessly give off their time and resources to take care of the lost and abandoned animals in our community. All funds received go directly to GCAW. Due to unpredictable weather an announcement will be made if necessary to postpone the date of the hike. The date may change but the cause stays the same!

UNDERBERG R1 450 000

Spacious 3-Bedroom Family Home with Flatlet and Beautiful Garden Setting. The home features three spacious bedrooms and two bathrooms. The main bedroom boasts an en-suite bathroom complete with a bath, shower, basin, and loo, while a second shared bathroom is fitted with a shower, basin, and loo. Adding further value is a newly painted flatlet, complete with a kitchenette and bathroom, making it ideal for extended family, guests, a home office, or rental income potential. The property is completed by a double garage and extensive off-road parking, ensuring ample space for multiple vehicles.

UNDERBERG R3 900 000. A TRANQUIL MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY- EXCITING OPPORTUNITY TO OWN IN THE GLEN, AT CASTLEBURN RESORT CAN FORM PART OF THE CASTLEBURN RENTAL POOL- Nestled within breathtaking surroundings, this spacious double-storey home offers an exceptional blend of comfort, tranquility, and natural beauty. Featuring four generously sized bedrooms and three well-appointed bathrooms, the property is ideal for both family living and a relaxing holiday retreat. The home's thoughtful layout provides ample space, creating a seamless flow between living areas while maintaining a sense of privacy and comfort. Large windows and elevated positioning allow you to fully appreciate the stunning scenic views of the surrounding mountains and lush landscapes—bringing nature right to your doorstep.

Gees, Brotherhood and Community Spirit Shine at the 2026 CHOC Walk Up Sani Pass

There are few places more fitting to witness the power of community than Sani Pass. On Saturday, 8 August, against the breathtaking backdrop of the Southern Drakensberg, hundreds of walkers gathered for the 2026 CHOC Walk Up Sani Pass. They came with one purpose—to walk in support of children and teenagers affected by cancer and life-threatening blood disorders, and to remind every family facing that journey that they are never alone. For Round Table Sani 152, however, this year's CHOC Walk was about more than serving burgers and pouring coffee. It was about showcasing exactly who we are. As hosts of the Natal South Coast Area Mass Raid, Sani 152 welcomed our fellow Tablers from Margate 46, Kokstad 35 and Kloof 190 to Underberg for a weekend built on brotherhood, service and plenty of gees. Friday evening saw members gather at our clubhouse, sharing stories of the past year, celebrating achievements and strengthening the friendships that make Round Table far more than just another organisation. Then, before the sun had properly warmed the mountains on Saturday morning, those friendships were put into action. Together, four Tables became one team. With braais fired up, kettles boiling and sleeves rolled up, Tablers and their families worked side by side to welcome weary walkers back from the mountain. Burgers, sausage rolls, steaming cups of coffee and plenty of laughter greeted every participant crossing the finish area. Long before the first walker returned and long after the final one finished, our members were hard



Rowan Garrat and Grant Trollope turning burgers for the choc walkers

at work ensuring everyone experienced the warmth that has become synonymous with Sani 152 hospitality. A special thank you goes to Underberg SPAR, whose continued generosity and supply of quality, fresh ingredients once again helped make the day a success. Community partnerships like these remind us that service is never achieved alone. The CHOC Walk Up Sani Pass, first held in 2010, has become one of the Southern Drakensberg's most meaningful annual events. Rather than a race, it offers participants an opportunity to reflect, remember and stand in solidarity with children currently fighting cancer, those who have overcome it and those whose memories continue to inspire every step taken up the mountain. Behind every walker is a cause worth supporting.

Since 1979, the CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa has walked alongside thousands of families by providing accommodation near treatment centres, transport assistance, nutritional support, psycho-social care and practical services that ease the burden during one of life's most difficult journeys. Every fundraiser, every volunteer and every donation helps ensure that no child or family has to face cancer alone. For Round Table, service is what we do. Brotherhood is who we are. Seeing members travel hundreds of kilometres simply to stand shoulder to shoulder with one another, not for recognition but because that's what Tablers do, perfectly captured the spirit of the weekend. The Natal South Coast Area Mass Raid wasn't measured by kilometres travelled or burgers served—it was measured in friendships strengthened, communities supported and lives positively impacted. That's the Sani 152 way. Round Table Sani 152 extends its sincere gratitude to Margate 46, Kokstad 35 and Kloof 190 for making the journey to Underberg and embracing our community as their own. Thank you to CHOC for the incredible work you continue to do, to the teams at the South African and Lesotho border posts for your hospitality, to Underberg SPAR for your unwavering support, and to every volunteer who gave their time to make the day possible. Most importantly, thank you to every walker. You reminded us that while mountains can be climbed alone, life's greatest challenges are overcome together. Because when Round Table shows up, we don't just bring the food—we bring the fellowship, the brotherhood and, of course, the gees. By Matt Hayes

At Splashy Fen, we believe in investing in the communities that make our festival so special Through our **Splashy Cares** initiative



At Splashy Fen, we believe in investing in the communities that make our festival so special. Through our Splashy Cares initiative, we're proud to have contributed to several community projects, including:

- R35,000 worth of educational toys and learning equipment to Underberg Pre-Primary School, benefiting 69 learners from Grades RRR to R. The donation includes construction toys, puzzles and games, outdoor play equipment, play dough tools, art easels and sensory play apparatus—resources that will encourage exploration, creativity and early childhood development.
- R20 000 to the running of and special projects associated with the Tidy Towns initiative within Underberg.
- R20 000 in sponsoring a bursary for a deserving and needy pupil at Faithway College
- R42 000 to St Patricks College in Kokstad for the volunteers they provide in helping control parts of the Splashy Fen campsites
- R10 000 to the Southern Drakensberg Tourism Association

Andrew Van Rensburg, a director at Splashy Fen, was particularly excited about the lasting effect that the Underberg Pre-Primary donation would have on the community and its youth. "For preschool children, play isn't a distraction from learning – it's how they learn best. We hope these new resources inspire curiosity, imagination and confidence in every child who uses them, and that one day, through this development of creativity and culture, we can welcome some of these pupils as performers at Splashy Fen. A heartfelt thank you to the incredible staff at Underberg Pre-Primary School for the important work they do every day. We're honoured to play a small part in helping shape the next generation."

Equally as important, are the other projects that Splashy supports, not only in Underberg, but the greater district. "Our contribution to Tidy Towns is an important one, and Ruth is doing some wonderful work. Faithway is an important community school, and for us to be able to sponsor a student whose family is unable to afford such education, is something that should make the whole of Splashy proud. And then St Patricks in Kokstad, part of the greater district, who have used their funds to great effect on developing the schools' facilities" explained Van Rensburg.

Collectively the Splashy Cares program, made possible by all the attendees of the festival, is having a wonderful effect on the community as a whole.

#SplashyCares #SplashyFen #CommunityMatters
#EarlyChildhoodDevelopment #Underberg #GivingBack
#LearningThroughPlay

UEMS Golf Day Fundraiser – Friday, 4 September 2026 Putt for a Purpose

As momentum continues to build toward the UEMS Golf Day Fundraiser, we extend our appreciation to every individual, business, and agricultural partner who has already pledged support or requested sponsorship information. Your engagement directly strengthens the Strategic Upgrade & Sustainability Programme, enabling UEMS to advance toward modern Advanced Life Support capability for the Underberg–Himeville region.

Community Participation Encouraged & Cash donations remain welcome and strongly encouraged. Every contribution, regardless of size, directly enhances emergency medical readiness and supports our ability to respond effectively across one of South Africa's most challenging EMS environments.

We warmly invite families to join us on the day. Bring your husband, wife, and children to enjoy time on the driving range, hit a few balls, and "Putt for a Purpose." This event is designed not only for golfers but for the entire community.

Evening Programme – Musical Night & Auction Following the golf activities, everyone are invited to a musical evening at the Underberg Country Club. A curated selection of items will be auctioned during the event, creating an opportunity for additional fundraising while offering a relaxed, community-focused atmosphere.

Sponsorship & Contribution Opportunities Sponsorship opportunities remain open, including:

- Ø Hole Sponsorship (R3,000)
- Ø Corporate and equipment-specific sponsorship packages
- Ø Branding opportunities across the course
- Ø Prize and goodie-bag item contributions
- Ø Auction and raffle items
- Ø Community contributions such as livestock, produce, tools, vouchers, or experience-based prizes

Pledge Forms Sponsor Pledge Forms are available for completion and return. These forms assist us in coordinating contributions

and ensuring appropriate recognition for all sponsors.

**UEMS Golf Day Fundraiser
– Putt for a Purpose Friday,
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TIDY TOWNS

Ruth Crouch

I still have to pinch myself to think that I am living here in Underberg. I have been here for only 6 years, after living in Pietermaritzburg for 60 years and then Donnybrook for 4 years so I am now giving away my age!!! However my father was ‘a true son of Underberg’ as he was of pioneer stock, brought up on the Nicholson farm called ‘Highlands’ on the Bushmen Nek road, along with his sister and three brothers. The other brothers all farmed but my Dad went the education route and his name, Skonk Nicholson became synonymous with Maritzburg College and DHS and he became a legendary rugby coach. But Underberg is in my roots and we spent many many holidays on the family farm.

Hence I do have this connection to this beautiful district which Dad called ‘God’s own country’. He majored in Geography and History and had a vast and keen knowledge of this area and spent many an hour discussing matters of interest with Robin Guy (Don’s father), Bill Small and Tod Collins. So my father’s love and knowledge of Underberg has resonated with me and I duly joined the Historical Society.

So that is a little of my background and one of the two main reasons why Tidy Towns has emerged and grown in my heart.

Now down to some of the issues relating to Tidy Towns.

THANK YOUS are in order

1. **67MMM** # those who kindly donated during the Mandela drive: Mandy Wood, Kathy Abbett , Lynn Dillion, Abbco Hydraulics , Rods Engineering, Barbara Bruynse, Glenda Berkeljohn, an anonymous person sent the R67.67 and Ludwig Combrink from Eagle’s Rock .

2. **Liz Simons** who together with Frans and Sabelo as part of her Mandela contribution, spent the entire Friday 24th July, cleaning and emptying the many big concrete bins. You may recall how many folk donated the R300 for the colourful designs she created and that James St. Pern made up. They brush cut round them and removed much litter, especially up at the viewing site.

3. **Donations.** Tidy Towns received a kind donation from Matthew Champkins of Highland Butchery and a new scheduled donor, Niki Tooze

4. **Maureen Neil** for the strong khaki coloured canvas bags she kindly made with a strong lining and strong zips for the four Tidy Town road signs.

5. **Greg Johnson** who kindly felled two medium sized gums near to the manse and the Police station.

6. **Rod Abbett** on his own initiative designed and made two sturdy signs to be cemented in possibly at the viewing site and up at the truck stop on the Swartberg road. They are one and a half metre high with signage ‘NO DUMPING’ and in Zulu too.

7. **Ian Bonsma** has given me permission to go onto his farm and collect river stones which we plan to utilise in various garden beds, notably the Taxi Rank and round the Himeville reservoir.

MURALS

The Himeville reservoir mural is nearing completion and it has been a fun filled and creative project with Don Guy, Nicky Lowe, Abi Bentley and myself and of course the little children all contributing. The FNB mural will commence during the first weekend of September. Christine Windsor has done a sterling job in getting this wall well prepped -bagged and painted two coats of roofing green. This has been done by Reggie, such a fine African man. Janais Von Eck has

come up with a wonderful image but I will leave that as a surprise. Lloyd Riggen has kindly agreed to sponsor the paint for us and to keep an eye on the long garden bed alongside Lemon Tree where locals are standing **IN** the bed, urinating and drinking. **I have cordoned off this area with hazard tape as I have again done on the deep dangerous storm water catch pit. Say no more!!! - Ruth Crouch**



WORK RECENTLY DONE

HIMEVILLE: In Arbuckle St1. removed many privet bushes along the panels near to the Crab apple trees 2. Removed undergrowth alongside a private property near to May’s garage 3. Felled small gums and neatening the section to the left of the Police Station

UNDERBERG1.Slashed the tall grass and reeds and removed much litter along the entire bank opposite the UCC at Elize Jacksons suggestion. 2. Systematically been clearing, felling and poisoning the many invasive privets growing in what I have coined the name ‘Poo Park’ opposite Dorning Motors where there were huge amounts of bottles, plastic and you know what..... 3. Cleaned and removed large amounts of litter on the 24th July from the section from Riverview Hospital to behind the old property belonging to James



Watson and onto Sangwana Crescent in preparation for the Gran Fondo race.

UPLIFTING NEWS I was chatting to Terence Van Dyk at Fab Fair in July about my concern re the alien gums and wattles and now how the bonga bongas had reached the Underberg district. I mentioned how I had voiced this matter to the municipality in a very large meeting held at the main Himeville Municipal building about the entrances into Bulwer and Underberg being full of these invasive species. I told him how my small Tidy Town team had felled several small gums round Bunkers and also panged bonga bongas alongside the road side. Terence then sent me several voice messages a few days ago outlining the work Dean Hayman has undertaken to clear that plot alongside Bunkers. Dean has contracted Barry Cole to do the necessary work. I duly went up to see for myself and was so thrilled to see the noticeable difference that has been made. A BIG thank you to Dean and Barry. They propose to keep poisoning on a regular basis to keep the bonga bongas at bay.

We had that huge Oak tree party in October 2022. I would love it, if we likewise could fell more of the big gums and so open up the dark and bottleneck entrance into Underberg round that corner bear Bunkers. Maybe we could call on ‘the troops’ again -the likes of Mike Hunter, Doreen, my son Ian Crouch, Scott from Forest and Gardens, Rex Lund, Richard Sunter, Jeanne Williamson, Daniel Swanepoel etc. who all helped... We would have to call in the traffic dept. again to monitor the situation as we did then in Oct 2024. But it would need to be a very well organised and coordinated effort. But ‘DOWN WITH GUMS. People make a mistake of allowing these invasive trees to take root. I noticed there are a large number of the gum saplings growing on the way to Clouds of Hope. Youngsters have been climbing into the oak trees with bow saws to cut branches for firewood. I have stopped several times and taken them to the two areas full of young gums on either side of the police station where they can help themselves!!.

Please community help police such matters....

So we soldier on with various matters. I must confess patience runs very thin re awaiting the future for (GOLD) Old Magistrates House, the storm water catch pits, possible Peoples market, bylaws to be enforced re cooking outside the pharmacy, remove the street mechanics in the heart of Underberg near to Standard Bank , illegal signage, drinking in public spaces etc....

I end with the words from Tex Turton and Kathy Abbett. ‘All we ask is get the job done . Now there are two folk who are proactive. I do wish Tex well and hope he will be elected as he can help ‘GET THINGS DONE’.

By Ruth Crouch

BIRDING IN THE SOUTHERN KZN DRAKENSBERG



Black Stork are nesting on Sheldon Williamson's farm near Coleford. The birds are incubating and hopefully this cold spell had no negative effect on the birds. Andrew Poole also normally has a Black Stork nest in the Inzinga area.

Two pairs of Cape Eagle Owls have nested locally both raised three chicks to at least the feathered stage, hopefully successfully fledging.

The snow up in Lesotho has displaced a few of the local species into lower elevations to get out of the cold and snow-covered habitat. Glen and I saw before the big cold front, a Pale Chanting Goshawk near Ripon Farm, on the Lotheni road. This bird was not doubt pushed down by very windy cold conditions in Lesotho. I did see it a day later on Ripon Farm but it appears to have moved on.

Drakensberg Siskins were seen as low as the start of the Giants Cup Hiking trail with many Sentinel Rock Thrushes, which typically get out of the highlands in any cold winter but Siskins seldom venture lower than about 1900 m asl.

TROUT FISHING IN UNDERBERG

Stillwater fishing has somewhat slowed down as many anglers report that fish have moved from the shallows after the spawn and hanging around deeper and feeding on snails and other food sources found near the bottom. But with these difficult fishing conditions some good fish were being fooled using correct tactics and most anglers putting in the time on the water were getting rewarded. Long leaders fished "Washing Line" method where a couple small flies like Buzzers Snails, Bloodworm and other Midge imitations are hanged and slowly retrieved up the water column has been doing well for some anglers. Fishing smaller patterns than usual have produced better results than the conventional "big" streamers. Cormorant fly patterns in black and olive have yeilded some good results too with many fish caught on these. As the warmer months are approaching and insects become more active we hope the fishing rises from this little slump and improve as the weather does. The Underberg Himeville Trout Fishing Club is holding the annual September festival soon and sure like the previous years will be a good success. Ill hopefully have some good fish to report on after.

With Spring just around the corner and the rivers given a boost with the recent snow, conditions look promising for a good start of the river season which opens September 1st. Until then one can target the Natal Yellowfish, our indigenous species are found in almost all our rivers. One would need to go down river a little as the upper reaches are generally too cold for them. They do put up a good fight and worth targeting. I am sure that by next report fishing will have picked up. Untill then tight lines and good fishing. **Underberg Flyfishing and lifestyle centre at The Clocktower Centre.** - Contact 0832286707 or 0655232877 Duane Vaughn Howell Check out our website at uhtfc.org

The migrants might step back a little here since this cold front. The early bird to arrive typically as always was a Black Kite, yes we must call our Yellow-billed Kite a Black Kite!! The first one was seen near Sani Pass Hotel on the 10 August. The next bird should be a White-throated Swallow.

Betty Tapp who has stayed at Mkomazana Lodge for at least 18 years told me she had never seen a Malachite Sunbird. Amazing for me but considering that on the property there were no Red-hot Pokers, Tree-fuchsia's, Wild Dagga, Aloes or any nectar producing plants. It just shows the importance of putting in some local plants if you want to attract some bird species. I am well aware of the problems with growing plants that Eland, Bush Buck love to feed on as well as frost.

These forbs will be dormant in winter so frost is not a factor but getting them to grow where antelope will not browse them down is. So try Wild Dagga, it germinates easily and grown in profusion on rough areas. Red-hot

Pokers could grow on an island or waterlogged areas where antelope spend less time. Tree-fuchsia's could be placed close to buildings or big rocks or in a thicket for protection from frost and antelope.

Birds & Beyond - Bird Tours & San Rock Art Walks

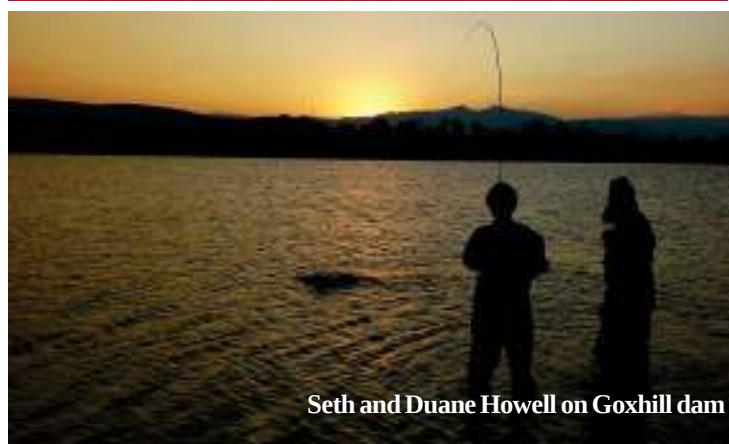
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TEAM ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST
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Lauren Canham
RHINO PEAK CHALLENGE

Lauren is a corporate banker by day and by weekends she can be found in the outdoors. This will be Lauren's third Rhino Peak Challenge. "I am really passionate about conservation and protecting our species and environments. This is an incredible event which raises ever more important funds for our conservation organisations." - Support Lauren in this year's Rhino Peak Challenge - <https://rhinopeakchallenge.co.za/participants.aspx...>

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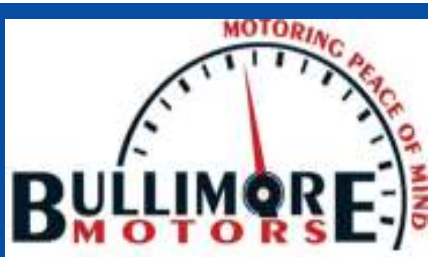
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Rhino Solo?....?



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Rhino peak is a popular hiking destination for the fit and adventurous, the size of the cairn on the summit is testament to its popularity. Mostly I advise people to stay the night in Annex or Pillar cave 4 km up from the Ezemvelo office - hide the packs and start as early as you can the following morning. There's a tricky bit just as you get into the basalt, if you don't crossover to the south slope in the pass you can go very wrong. I've hiked it with 80 years old's and an 11-year-old. Not long ago I'd been asked by a concerned family connection if I could accompany some very keen teenage boys on their quest to conquer our 'Horney Beast' I relented, starting before dawn we picked up some camping Mountain Backpacker Club folk on the way and were successful in our endeavor. Rhino is a common ask, mostly I say No! High berg guiding is beyond my qualification.

Those who follow mountain news in our parts will have heard of the Rhino's last dramatic hiker episode. He was lucky. Dissecting his story, we discover that his MAYDAY call to Rohan at Lake Naverone came in the mid - afternoon. This activated a network of emergency personal. The Ezemvelo guys picked up a torch light that evening so there was a rough idea of where the hiker was stuck below the escarpment. The hiker did not fill in the register - BIG MISTAKE!

Now safely back in Johannesburg I phoned him. He immediately began our conversation by complimented all those involved in his rescue, he was quite overwhelmed emotionally grateful and happy for a conversation.

Quote; "That peak it beckons to you - I sat on the edge of the lake and looked at it, I had to climb it!"

He went on; " In retrospect that decision had been too spontaneous - I miscalculated the descent. I realized I was in trouble in the mid- afternoon, that snow gives you a false sense of reality, an illusion of sorts - after speaking to Rohan at Lake Naverone resort where I was staying my phone died, I had an emergency phone but it didn't work- 911/112 the reply was unclear, it directed me to Metro police - After finding a rock I snuck in next to it and my only consolation was the sight of a fire far below and torches coming up the pass below- later I saw them descend again".

What he'd seen were Ezemvelo staff , deplored MCSA Mountain rescue guys and some Berg Protection cadets climbing the pass. A helicopter activated in co-ordination with MCSA rescue personnel arrived in the morning and dropped two professional rescue guys on top of the mountain. Using his boot prints in the snow the two mountain rescue guys attempted to locate the hiker. He'd descended down an inappropriate and incorrect gorge before Mashai pass, it was by shouting that he was at last located. Some challenging flying followed, by now he was suffering with hypothermia. The solo hiker was air lifted from a knoll 150 m below the escarpment where he'd endured a night

SANI COMMUNITY FORUM

"People's indifference is the best breeding ground for corruption to grow." — Delia Ferreira Rubio – former chair of Transparency International

A renewed drive for accountable local government is placing residents and civic organisations at the centre of efforts to improve service delivery and restore confidence in struggling municipalities. **ELECTIONS:** With South Africa's Local Government Elections set for 4 November 2026, voters are hearing a fresh round of campaign promises while continuing to experience the everyday consequences of municipal underperformance. The approaching elections give communities an important opportunity to demand more than assurances. Residents should expect clear commitments, responsible leadership and measurable action on neglected public spaces, unsafe conduct and weak enforcement of municipal by-laws. Civic participation matters, but the legal and operational responsibility for enforcement remains with the municipality. **CRIMINAL CHARGES:** The wider accountability debate has intensified amid calls for criminal and disciplinary action against municipal officials accused of financial mismanagement, gross negligence and failures of oversight. Such action, where supported by evidence and due process, signals that poor governance and failing service delivery should carry consequences.



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between - 6 to 10 degrees. Rescued and deposited with a Doctor and Emergency services at Garden Castle the hiker recalled that he found it difficult to stand.

The question begs - Was he wise to attempt this peak on his own? One answer is: He's 24! I was once 24! I recall a mountain once beckoning me - the Matterhorn in Switzerland. I'd camped below. A casual chat with an adventurous soul persuaded me that I could get myself up to the glacier. With a wing and a prayer, I set off on a well-trodden path to the head of the glacier without permit nor permission, an act of pure youthful ignorance. Presently I found a glacier of sorts and an empty mountain hut, I made myself a bed in the hay and slept comfortably , a fox emerged in the snow in the morning, it was memorable, I'd ticked a box. Descending the next day, I wandered into the Zermatt town graveyard below, the Matterhorn clearly clocks up its fair share of more serious mountaineer causalities. So, what about hiking Rhino Solo?

Experience and fitness are a given, (Have you served your apprenticeship? formal or informal) add to this protocol (Always fill in the register) have correct gear and supplies, these are important boxes any hiker must tick. But I'm going to backtrack here. Two is company, three or more and you're on the road to comradeship. My advice - Share your experience!

Hypothermia. Of this we have some experience. It's a frightening condition, add shock, it can be a death sentence. I recall an event earlier this year. We hit a hail storm with stones the size of golf balls. Wet through we battled to find a cave - streamlets became rivers, the path slippery, Helen fell in while crossing a gushing watercourse and was at the end of her tether. Her condition became worrying until a sweet hot drink in Spectacle Cave warmed her from the inside. Our Rhino peak hiker had dreamt that night of being a hypothermia case in Netflix's HOUSE series, his socks wet through, he removed them, placing his feet in his backpack for the night. His toes are still numb he reports as I write but generally that all is well. He was lucky! Take note; 1. When you hike in the Ezemvelo area you must fill in the mountain register. This describes where you are going, whether you are experienced and what gear you have. Also your age and the colour of your pack and other important phone contacts. The Ezemvelo register is located outside the locked office for a reason, They open at 8.am and close at 4. pm

2. Having filled in the form, you tear off the attached slip for reference , the slip has an important phone number direct to the Mountain rescue network. You put that in your pack. The only number the hiker had was the accommodation facility where he was staying and on top of that his phone died soon after his MAYDAY call, touch and go! I would go further suggest you tell someone else connected to you where you are going. Hedge your bets. 3. Charge your phone and load appropriate numbers and a map. Map reading is a skill familiarize yourself with it before and during the hike.

Don and Helen Guy take mostly day hikes in the lower Southern Drakensberg. They are particularly familiar and interested in Rock



propose practical solutions and support improvements where municipal capacity is limited. These efforts should complement—not replace—the municipality's duty to enforce its by-laws, protect public spaces and respond to reported hazards. Civic organisations have reported these problems and offered workable solutions; the municipality must now respond and act. We call for a public by-law enforcement plan that identifies priority areas, assigns responsible officials, sets clear inspection and enforcement timeframes, protects pavements for pedestrians and provides regular progress updates. Enforcement should be fair, consistent and supportive of lawful trading, but continued obstruction, unsafe activity and non-compliance cannot be allowed to define our towns. As voters prepare for 4 November, they should ask every candidate and party how these commitments will be delivered, funded and monitored after election day. A NEW VIEW: A separate initiative, Rescue South Africa, is also seeking to stimulate debate about national renewal and merit-based leadership. Political analyst Prince Mashele has said the project is expected to launch after the 2026 Local Government Elections as a possible alternative ahead of the 2029 general election. Further information is available at <https://rescuesouthafrica.org/>. Whether or not residents support this initiative, its emphasis on active citizenship offers a timely reminder: communities can organise, demand accountability and work together to save their towns. Could this be the catalyst our towns need?

By Di Sunter
Sani Community Forum

From Desk to Dairy: Bridgette Cawood Shares the Art of Cheesemaking

By Reine Combrinck

The scent of warm milk and fresh mulled wine filled the room at the recent monthly Country Women's meeting on August 5th, where members and guests gathered to experience something truly unique. Local Himeville resident Bridgette Cawood took the stage to share her journey into the world of artisanal cheesemaking, offering a fascinating look at the passion, patience, and precise craft required to transform raw milk into delicious homemade cheeses.

Finding a Passion Beyond the Desk

For Bridgette, cheesemaking began as a deliberate effort to find a meaningful, engaging hobby. Having spent years in administrative office roles, she found herself yearning for a creative outlet that would keep her mind active and allow her to work from home.

"More than the financial side of it, I actually just needed to be busy and keep my mind going," Bridgette explained to the audience. Her early curiosities recalled childhood memories of making simple cottage cheese from Maas. However, figuring out how to transition from soft, unpressed curds to firm, aged cheeses was a learning curve. From experimenting with fig branch sap as a natural rennet substitute, to ordering her first Camembert kit online, Bridgette's journey was built on trial, error, and determination.

What started just over a year ago with a modest one-liter pot on her kitchen stove has rapidly expanded into a serious craft. Today, Bridgette processes 90-liter batches of milk at a time, yielding roughly nine kilograms of hard cheese per run, adhering to the classic ratio of one kilogram of cheese per ten liters of milk.

Farm-Fresh Collaboration

A major turning point in Bridgette's cheesemaking story came through local community connection. Rose Hollow reached out to offer her a two-day-a-week administrative position. The role turned out to be a match made in heaven: it allowed Bridgette to balance her time between farm duties, office work, and her growing passion.

Working on the farm means Bridgette now sources rich, raw milk directly from the cows she sees daily. She also creates her own natural cultures directly from the farm's milk, avoiding the high costs of imported commercial cultures.

Resourcefulness is a recurring theme in Bridgette's work. Highlighting the strong community spirit of the area, she shared how local handy-men and friends have stepped in to support her craft. Her husband, Colin, turned custom wooden molds and built press rigs to save on prohibitively expensive equipment, while local artist Mark Church crafted a specialised cheese knife to aid in cutting the finished wheels. The Science and Patience of the Craft

During her presentation, Bridgette explained that cheese is a sensitive, fussy medium. She currently produces 18 different varieties, noting that even subtle changes—such as the length of time curds are stirred or small adjustments in temperature—drastically alter the final flavour.

She focuses primarily on pressed, aged cheeses like Gouda, Colby, Swiss, and Havarti rather than quick fresh cheeses. Pressed cheeses allow for a quieter, more managed aging process in her homemade "cheese cave"—a converted spare bedroom fitted with a dedicated air conditioner to keep temperatures and humidity strictly controlled during hot summer months.

To give attendees a practical taste of the process, Bridgette walked the group through the quick steps of making Paneer—a fresh, acid-set cheese popular in Indian cuisine that requires no rennet, just milk and a bit of lemon juice or vinegar.

Looking Ahead

Bridgette's long-term vision is as inviting as her cheeses. She hopes to convert her home garage into a fully equipped, dedicated cheesery featuring a tasting table where locals and visitors can stop by to sample her creations.

Following her presentation, attendees were treated to a special cheese tasting paired with warm mulled wine, giving everyone a firsthand taste of the remarkable quality that comes from local ingredients, patience, and true community craftsmanship.

The Country Women group extends its warm thanks to Bridgette for an inspiring and informative morning.

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

**Bridgette Cawood
wearing her
cheesemaking coat**



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Snow, Horses, Heroes and a Whole Lot of Heart in the Southern Drakensberg

For days we watch the skies and ask the eternal Underberg question: “Will it snow, or won’t it?” Well, this latest snowfall certainly answered that one — and then some!

Sadly, the school holidays are over, so while visitors have arrived in increased numbers, we missed the opportunity for a proper holiday-season snow rush. But that hasn’t stopped the Underberg from buzzing.

What a month it has been! The last weekend in July, the Drakensberg was alive with the thunder of hooves and the cheers of spectators as our local Polocrosse club once again showed that Underberg can compete with the best. They hosted not one, but two international teams — from Australia and the USA.

The following weekend was just as energetic, with the CHOC Walk Up Sani Pass. Various Women’s Day events including in Bulwer hosted by Mahwaqa Hiking Club, Wild Sky Paragliding, and yoga at the Mountain View Hotel all adding to the mix. There have been markets supplied by local providers and these remain well attended. I’s been busy! And that’s exactly what we want. The benefits of these events ripple throughout the district.

Accommodation establishments, restaurants, retailers, fuel stations and all the businesses supporting tourism feel the positive effects. Because visitors don’t just attend an event. They eat, sleep, shop, fill up their vehicles, explore and spend — and that means opportunity for the whole community. The same happens during school holidays. And then there is snow... Snow brings another level of excitement, energy and, let’s be honest, anxiety!

When the snow falls, people step up.

There are so many people who deserve recognition as outstanding ambassadors for our district. This is definitely not a ranking — just a heartfelt thank you to some of those who have stood out during this extraordinary spell of winter weather.

Our traffic police and SAPS have worked tirelessly to keep people safe and manage the inevitable challenges that come with winter weather. A very special mention must go to Terrance Khawula from our local Traffic Department. Terrance has an incredible network along the roads into Underberg and always seems to have the latest information at his fingertips. His communication and willingness to assist have been invaluable, particularly when road conditions can change by the hour. Our local security companies have also been playing their part, keep-

ing a watchful eye on roads and communities and sharing valuable information when conditions became difficult.

A special mention goes to Berg Protection Services. One of their posts, which we shared on the SDCTO Facebook page about trucks stuck on the R617, was viewed by more than 200,000 people! That is phenomenal.

It also shows just how hungry people are for accurate, local information when the weather turns — and what can happen when our community works together to get the right information out quickly.

Our CTO member, SuperSpar Underberg, also deserves a huge thank you. They made sure they had sufficient stock for both local residents and visitors, helping ensure that essential supplies were available when travel and deliveries were being affected by the weather. That kind of forward planning makes a real difference. When Mother Nature throws a curveball, it helps enormously to know that the shelves are stocked!

The Border Management Authority, and particularly Acting Port Commander Paul Kok, have been incredibly supportive. Commander Kok is available to the SDCTO around the clock with updates on Sani Pass and has also become an important intermediary with the Department of Transport. Across the border, Inspector Thabo from Lesotho has worked alongside him to keep communication flowing.

Then there is Rosemary Hall, our SDCTO social media manager, who is quite literally on 24/7 standby when the snow arrives. Road information, border updates, warnings, photographs and videos are shared as quickly as possible. And we simply cannot thank our members and local residents enough for sending their photographs and videos to Rosemary — and for everyone who shares our posts. You are part of the information network too! Our goal is simple: to be the place people turn to for reliable, timely snow news in our area. And then there are the Sani Pass guides... The list is far too long to name everyone, but these men deserve enormous recognition. They walk, dig, clear and apply salt. They battle freezing conditions for hours at a time — and this week they have been out there day after day. Behind them are the tour operators, supplying salt and transport and doing whatever they can to keep the Pass moving. I particularly want to mention Emile from Roof of Africa. On one occasion, he drove stranded tourists to safety at the South African border post, including one visitor who desperately needed to retrieve her insulin. On Friday, he and the guides were once again digging out a vehicle — and then drove that same tourist to safety. That is more than tourism. That is people looking after people.

But while we applaud these rescue efforts, we also need to remember the risks. Rescuers put themselves in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions to help others. What may look like an exciting snow adventure from the roadside can become a serious situation very quickly. We must also recognise and hail Mountain Rescue and all

the support teams who worked in terrible weather to rescue a lone hiker. To the rescuers: thank you.

And to visitors: please don’t underestimate the mountain, the weather or the conditions. Snow is beautiful. But it comes at a cost.

One thing this snowfall has reminded me of is that snow is fantastic for tourism. The photographs are spectacular. The excitement is contagious. Visitors love it. But snow can also be dangerous, disruptive and expensive. Perhaps the biggest lesson from this latest snowfall isn’t about the weather at all. It’s about the people. We have an extraordinary group of people in the Southern Drakensberg who love tourism, respect Sani Pass, care about visitors and simply refuse to let the snow win. To everyone who has cleared a road, pushed a vehicle, shared an update, answered a phone, supplied salt, transported a visitor, opened their doors, kept their shelves stocked, fed a stranded traveller or simply helped where help was needed:

THANK YOU!

And to anyone I have inadvertently left unnamed who feels they should have been mentioned — my sincere apologies. There are simply too many good people doing good things! A warm welcome — and a fond farewell. We also extend a very warm welcome to Paolo and Kim, the new owners of Heritage Plants. And to Elize Jackson, who has sold the business but thankfully remains in our district — that really is our blessing! Elize, thank you for your many years of guidance, support and for helping create countless beautiful gardens across our community. Your contribution has been appreciated far beyond the garden centre gates. Paolo and Kim — welcome! We look forward to meeting you both and welcoming you into our tourism family. Come and be part of the journey

The Southern Drakensberg Community Tourism Organisation is growing, making positive changes and building strong relationships with both district and local government tourism departments. Membership is just R750 per annum. If you are involved in tourism — or simply believe in the future of our beautiful district — come and be part of it.

Contact any SDCTO committee member or visit the local Tourism Office at Local Collection. We’re growing. We’re working together. We’re making a difference.

By Michelle Stevens

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This photo of Keren and Ruth Rowley taken on Sani Pass by someone who was in a Lesotho on Track vehicle had a 143 000 reach on Mountain Echo facebook page. To reach even more viewers send your photos to 0836593083 or @SOUTHERNDRAK facebook

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* Marex Group: The Quiet Giant That Just Got Loud

There is a particular satisfaction in watching a high-conviction position do exactly what my thesis said it would, on the exact timeline the thesis implied. This week, Marex Group (NASDAQ: MRX) delivered that satisfaction in spades. On Wednesday, the diversified commodities and financial services platform reported second-quarter results so far ahead of consensus that the market did something markets rarely due to a mid-cap financial: it sent the shares up almost 19% in a single session.

The numbers earn the reaction. Second-quarter revenue rose 39% year-on-year to \$695.8 million, comfortably outpacing every segment forecast on the Street. Adjusted profit before tax climbed 56% to \$165.9 million, lifting the adjusted margin to 23.8% from a level that, twelve months earlier, would have been considered a good year rather than a good quarter. Earnings per share came in at \$1.64 against a consensus estimate of \$1.36 — a 20.6% surprise, and the fourth consecutive quarter in which Marex has beaten the Street. For the first half of 2026, revenue reached \$1.39 billion, up 43%, with adjusted profit before tax up 57% to \$318.6 million. What makes this beat worth writing about, rather than simply filing away, is where the growth came from. This was not a single desk having a lucky quarter. Agency and execution revenue rose 35% to \$351 million, and market making revenue more than doubled to over \$118 million. All four business segments grew. That breadth is precisely the quality Fenestra’s GARP screen was built to reward: a business whose earnings power does not depend on one trading book, one commodity cycle, or one client relationship. The corporate story moved just as fast as the trading story. Marex completed its domiciliation to Bermuda on 1 July, a structural shift aimed at capital efficiency and long-term flexibility. Alongside it, the group issued \$500 million of hybrid capital and \$500 million of senior unsecured notes — a deliberate strengthening of the balance sheet ahead of, not in response to, further growth. And growth is exactly what management is pursuing: the completed acquisitions of Bright Point, Levmet and Webb Traders were joined this month by an agreement to acquire Brainchild Capital Investments, continuing a pattern of disciplined, capability-adding bolt-ons rather than scale for its own sake. Webb Traders in particular brings European equity derivatives market-making expertise that plugs directly into the segment that just doubled its revenue.

The sell side has caught up quickly. Jefferies lifted its price target from \$57 to \$80 in *Extra ordinary profits from ordinary shares* Winning stock market strategies* Marex Group: The Quiet Giant That Just Got Loud

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In relationships: Anxious over-monitoring of a partner’s mood or a friend’s silence often amplifies tension. Redirecting attention toward your own grounded, present-moment behaviour — rather than decoding every signal — tends to defuse rather than escalate.

In physical health: Hyper-awareness of bodily sensations (a racing heart, a twinge) can snowball into panic. Practising a shift toward neutral, engaging activity — movement, conversation, a task requiring hands and eyes — gives the nervous system evidence that nothing dangerous is happening.

In daily habits: Build small redirection cues into your routine — a phrase, a physical action, or a change of environment — that you can call on the moment you notice attention drifting toward worry.

Handicrafts are a great way of activating divergent attention – this could be crochet or knitting or woodwork and many people who do these activities will describe certain patterns or stitches as “calming or relaxing”. This is because the mind has to count or monitor and the attention it takes calms the anxious mind and gives it a break.

The technique isn’t about ignoring problems; it’s about refusing to let unproductive focus run unchecked and notice when you are doing this. The five second rule is one where you notice the thought and do something different for only five seconds – amazingly, this is enough to interrupt the monkey mind. Start small: notice one moment a day when attention traps itself on worry, and practise consciously moving it toward something purposeful. Consistency, not intensity, is what makes the shift doable and sustainable. Next month I want to start a short series on



Plan to THRIVE in 2026

continuing a pattern of disciplined, capability-adding bolt-ons rather than scale for its own sake. Webb Traders in particular brings European equity derivatives market-making expertise that plugs directly into the segment that just doubled its revenue.

The sell side has caught up quickly. Jefferies lifted its price target from \$57 to \$80 in mid-July, reiterating its Buy rating, and Piper Sandler moved from \$55 to \$75 around the same time — both calls made before the second-quarter print vindicated them.

With the shares now trading in the high-\$60s, the market has re-rated Marex meaningfully in a matter of weeks, yet has not yet closed the gap to where the most bullish analysts, or Fenestra, see fair value.

A conscientious analyst owes the position some scrutiny before celebrating it. Roughly \$35 million of the half’s pre-tax profit came from the disposal of Winterflood’s custody business — a genuine gain, but a non-recurring one, and it flatters the headline margin expansion by a few points. Insiders have been net sellers over the trailing 90 days, which is worth monitoring even if it is not, on its own, a reason to doubt the operating story. And a company integrating four acquisitions inside twelve months while simultaneously redomiciling and reshaping its capital structure is a company with more moving parts than usual — execution risk is real, even when execution has, so far, been excellent.

For Fenestra clients specifically, they read-through matters beyond the position itself. Marex sits in a portfolio built around a simple discipline — ten names, screened hard on PEG, ROIC, free cash flow yield and moat durability, with no exceptions made for a good story that fails the numbers. It is easy to hold a winner when it is winning; the harder test is whether the same discipline would buy it today, at today’s price, on today’s facts. Having re-run the screen against the second-quarter numbers, the answer is yes. The margin trajectory, the segment diversification, and the balance sheet discipline behind the Bermuda move all strengthen rather than weaken the case, even after accounting for the one-off gain and the near-term integration load.

None of that changes the conclusion. Marex now serves more than 3,400 active clients across over 60 exchanges, a franchise Fenestra flagged as a durable, diversified moat well before this week’s results confirmed it. The PEG math, the return on invested capital trajectory, and the free cash flow generation that first earned Marex its place in Fenestra’s concentrated ten-position portfolio has all moved in the right direction, not the wrong one.

AI used William Meyer to write this article.

If you are not happy with your portfolio performance or would like a second opinion, please do not hesitate to contact Fenestra for a free review of your portfolio.

William Meyer - 079624403

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Divergent Attention: Redirecting Focus for Mental Health

Last month I wrote about the skill of *divergent attention* as related to exercise. Divergent attention is choosing an exercise or activity that uses all your cognitive direction and therefore leaves little time for the anxious part of your mind to be at work. This can give anxious people a mental break from ruminating and worrying and those “what if?” questions that shape the anxious mind.

However, let us move past exercise and consider this useful mind “hack” in a broader context. What if you could stop the monkey mind and redirect it at will? This is such a deceptively simple idea and the more you practice the better you become at it. Where you place your attention shapes what your nervous system treats as important — and, by extension, as threatening. Sustained, anxious focus on symptoms or fears doesn’t calm; it reinforces the very alarm response driving them. Divergent attention is not suppression or distraction for its own sake, but deliberate, structured redirection — consciously shifting attention toward something purposeful (not just away from something feared).

This principle goes well past symptom management. Divergent focus — training attention to move toward engagement rather than toward worry — can reshape how you handle stress, relationships, and performance under pressure. What are some other areas (apart from exercise) that we could use this skill?

At work: When a looming deadline triggers spiralling thoughts, redirect focus onto the very next concrete action rather than the outcome. This interrupts the rumination loop before it builds momentum.



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hypnosis – a subject close to my heart and my practice and explore how this useful tool can help to train the very skills mentioned above.

By Heidi Kyle

Invasive alien Plants, Poaching, Bird Count & Hiking Alone

The Southern Drakensberg Invasive Alien Plant booklet is still widely available and it is hoped that those who have bought it are following the details on how to control and eradicate these pests that have been introduced into our mountain environment. This month we look at a grass species commonly known as Pampas Grass – *Cortaderia selloana*. It has been listed as "Category 1b which means that they must be controlled or eradicated. They may not be planted, propagated, sold or donated" (information from the booklet). It is easily recognizable by large plume like flowers which can reach a height of 6m. It is difficult to eradicate and because the seeds are wind dispersed and therefore travel great distances. The seed heads can irritate eyes and nose and protective clothing should be worn when the roots and rhizomes are dug up, the best way to deal with the plant, and destroyed. As with all invasive alien species follow-up has to be done regularly to deal with regrowth. Many an area where much effort has been expended in removing or spraying these plants and where they are unattended dormant seeds and or roots come back with a vengeance and surprising virility only to reinfest the area. The illegal hunting has raised its ugly head. This is done with dogs or, as bad, setting snares. In both forms it is indiscriminate and cruel. At this time of year pregnant females are



an easy target for hunting because in their condition they are a bit slower than the males and younger animals and both she and the foetus are ripped apart while still alive. What the IDIOT, IDIOT, ISILIMA fails to understand is that there is no increase in populations or replacement of the dead animal because the area is totally decimated of wildlife. This has happened everywhere else and now the small groups of target species, mainly antelope like Common Reedbuck and Vaal Rhebok, are only on private land. The snares catch everything and to make matters worse they are often not monitored regularly once

set. An animal so caught sadly ends up as a rotting corpse which died in excruciating pain and dehydration and a meat source that is not utilized. All communities should be alert to this threat to all our wildlife and report and or come forward with information which can help stop it for the benefit of everyone.

Honorary Officers have had another busy month. Members of our group helped at the refreshment table for the Gran Fondo gravel road bicycle race. On the same weekend the biannual Big Bird on Farm count (known as CAR = Coordinated avifaunal road count) took place over two days. We covered three circuits, each averaging 65km in the Coleford, Bushman's Nek and Himeville areas. This census has been going for over 20 years over the whole country and the data collected is an indicator of bird movements, impacts of changed farming practices, transformed landscapes and decline or increase of target species in specific areas. Other members worked on and restored the water supply from the dam to the Himeville Nature Reserve reservoir, which supplies water to the Rangers House, Staff Quarters and Picnic Site ablutions.

Our HO member Paul Roth, who is also a member of Mountain Club of South Africa, is always on standby for mountain rescue. He with other

DON'T HUNT WHAT YOU CAN'T KILL

I bet that caption made you take notice!

The scene of the crime I write about is set between Himeville low cost and the Pholela river, a stream with half a dozen man-made dams and wetlands. The Crime - a pack of loose dogs killing at least two Reedbuck which they drowned in a dam recorded by a witness early August. Emotions have been high on the issue.

Winter is NOT a kind time for wildlife in our parts. The veld is burnt all too frequently, particularly wetlands which are the wildlife's only refuge. It's easy pickings for dogs on the loose. This small catchment's custodianship is shared, wildlife cares nothing for ownership, that's a human thing, neither did the pack of dogs that drove the animal into the dam where it succumbed. The dogs in question have been identified - the owners not. Within the law a property owner who sees unattended dogs hunting is permitted to destroy them when they have the necessary licenses. Needless to say, not much more than talk has happened regards these crimes. Let's go back historically.

Rock art the length of Africa starting in Egypt show dogs and man in a partnership. Archeological evidence shows three types of dog associated with the iron age folk who trekked down here, a small, medium and larger type dog. All *Canis Africanus*, what we now call the African dog, like the dogs in Europe and beyond they have been used for hunting, protection and company.

Enter the Greyhound a slender sprinter, today this European breed has contaminated, if you like, the original African dog *Canis africanus*. It was

this hybrid type that has been identified as the culprit of the crime I write about. I once met an amazing character in Nkandla - 'Jackson'. We spent days with him filming his beautiful dogs. We witnessed and filmed two 'traditional dog hunts', like all hunting its gory stuff. We ran DNA sequences on them, they were as close to *Canis africanus* as we could find. Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife were trying to crack out some legal framework for traditional dog hunting?! It's common knowledge that hunting with dogs is linked to a gambling culture, there's some big money involved - and ego/prestige - it's a prickly - pear. What to do?

Well it's illegal I'm told, feral hunting dogs without their handlers can be shot on private land. But there's caution in this. Best call Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, they issue all hunting permits or the SAP and importantly take photographs to identify the dog handlers/owners and the location.

highly experienced team members recently coordinated the successful rescue of a hiker on Rhino Peak in very cold and icy conditions. Team members often travel great distances to get to the base area before they set off, often at peril to themselves, to bring people to safety. The basic rules for hiking in our mountains are to fill in the Mountain Register correctly and not to deviate from the chosen path and as important not to hike alone. **By Rosanne Clark**

For further inquiries about joining the group or offering assistance in any way please contact:- Chairman Julian Simon 0836516777

southerndrakensberg.chair@ezemvelo.co.za
Secretary Cayla Beghin 0824932305 - southerndrakensberg.secretary@ezemvelo.co.za or Ezemvelo HOs.



Us humans are emotionally attached to the animals we have domesticated, on the other hand we eat them use them in war and more. I'm told by the Giants Cup animal welfare folk that the most popular domestic dog occupation in Himeville low cost is for security, usually a chained up canine. The slender hunting dogs, part of this ordeal are associated with the same location but have been spotted well beyond on the Sani Pass road. The Hunting sub culture is very mobile, while it can be checked it's unlikely to be eliminated. Commercial farmland is infiltrated by the hunters and their dogs because wildlife on traditional land is hunted out. Dig a little deeper and you will find out that there's

big money to be made and lost. Ask any vet, a hunting dog owner will pay up to 10k on his dog and there are intricate breeding programs.

The Biosphere concept is a good one - A common interest in looking after those ribbons of natural habitat within commercial farmland coupled with a security aspect. EYES AND EARS. Some landowners in the district have taken things further - Hikers and bike riders are regular visitors on their land sometimes covering large distances in a single day. Everyone has a camera - it's a self regulating, economical and district enriching concept - Just saying. **By Don Guy** doncguy59@gmail.com

Pam Golding's Mandela Day initiative

This year, over a couple of days leading up to Mandela Day, we got stuck into the Himeville Care Centre's classroom. Assisted by Agrimark's generous donation of base paint and a delightful wall mural kindly donated by NUD Signs, we repainted and decorated the walls to bring a cheerful and refreshed look to the room. Grateful thanks to AGRIMARK and NUD SIGNS for your contributions and our JADE LLOYD for your creativity and slick project management. Also, we are grateful for our special association with NOSIPHO NCOBENI, you and your family inspire us with the care, dedication and love that you give so selflessly to others. Angela Walker, Principal, Pam Golding Properties.



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HIP REPLACEMENT for pets and people - collaboration

A few days ago I was going through a box in my garage and found some black and white photos. They were of an artificial hip implant and a German Shepherd dog. When you are a young vet you are so keen, so eager, so confident that you forge ahead where angels fear to tread..and sometimes into dangerous waters. In the early 1980”s I worked with another vet named Roger. We worked well together and had many laughs. A company rep for surgical instruments offered me a paediatric artificial hip replacement. At the time we had a case of a German Shepherd dog who had hip dysplasia. This is a condition where the hip joint bones do not fit well together, resulting in pain, difficulty in walking and later severe arthritis. We were excited. Here was an opportunity to do a hip replacement operation on this dog. Firstly we asked for help from a young human orthopaedic surgeon. He gladly came to the surgery one Saturday morning and showed us step by step how to do the operation. (The dead dog we used for the operation demonstration did let fly with a load of poo in the middle of the demonstration but no one apart from me seemed to notice.)

The big day arrived and Roger and I, aided by his veterinary nurse wife, proceeded with the operation. Orthopaedic surgery is really just like carpentry, with saws, hammers, screws and drills...all made of bright , shiny stainless steel. All went well until we reached the point where we had to connect the new artificial hip into the new socket. It just would not go in. A few anxious moments followed. Then Roger picked up a surgical hammer and gave it a sharp tap – and the hip popped into place !! We were dancing a celebratory jig,

mentally of course, and were mightily relieved. The closing up of the operation site was routine after that. Roger later adopted the dog and all I have is a photo of the dog that was taken some time later. He was standing and looking like any other dog. Much relief. A few days later I received a phone call from a professor of surgery at Onderstepoort demanding his instruments. Now we both knew they were not his instruments. They were a loan set lent to both of us by the instrument company. But I suppose if you are a professor the truth need not be exact. After all you sit on Mount Olympus with other deities. And anyway, who will know ? Just some inconsequential little vet in KZN.

Anyway I duly returned the instruments to the company. A few years later I went to work in the surgery department of the same professor. He was doing quite a lot of hip replacements but he never acknowledged that we had also done one. In fact I saw one case where he had misdirected the shaft of the implant and it went through the side of the femur and had to be removed later. We can all make mistakes so don’t be too cocky and proud. This is a very humbling profession. Just when you think you have got it all sorted some massive mess up will occur and bring you down to earth with a bump.

These days this kind of operation is more common and there are a number of excellent , skilled veterinary surgeons. But it is expensive and there are other options.

My wife used to work for a well known cardiologist .There was a dog badly needing a pace maker. I asked her if she could source one and

she did. Later with the help of a human cardiologist it was inserted into the dog and it worked well. A veterinary orthopaedic surgeon closed up the pocket for the pace maker then claimed all the credit. Such are ego’s sometimes. He never mentioned the cardiologist ‘s help who made it all happen or my wife’s contribution.

Human doctor’s used to be very generous with helping vets with problems. They recognized the similarities between the two professions. In fact when I was a student they used to have an intermedics weekend when the vets, medical students and the dental students visited each other and saw how similar our training was. Nowadays I find it hard to find a doctor who will discuss my cases with me on an equal basis.

Recently a friend passed on a book to me written by a vet’s wife. It is titled “If the Cat Fits “ (Yes, that’s not a typo : If the CAT fits “) written by Chrystal Sharp. It is so well written and terribly funny. If you can get one of her books , please read them . I know she has written 3 books because I read them years ago while doing a locum. But they are really good ..there may even be more by now.....Tod...tell Trish she needs to get her laptop out. I would love to read about life married to you.

By Llew Evans retired vet



GCAW – Caring for Animals, One Paw at a Time

At Giants Cup Animal Welfare (GCAW), our work extends far beyond the animals currently waiting in our kennels. Every day brings new calls for assistance, new challenges and new opportunities to make a difference in the lives of animals and their owners throughout our community.

We would first like to extend a very special thank you to Kevin Abbot, who generously tests all the electrical and mechanical appliances donated to our Thrift Shop. Thanks to **Kevin Abbott’s** time and expertise, we can ensure that the appliances offered for sale in the shop have been tested and are in working order. This is an invaluable service, and we are extremely grateful for his continued assistance.

Sadly, dog adoptions are currently moving very slowly. Our kennels still have wonderful dogs waiting for their forever homes, so we encourage anyone considering adding a four- legged member to their family to please come and meet the dogs at GCAW. You may just find your new best friend waiting for you.

GCAW is also currently rehabilitating two dogs with broken legs. Both are receiving plenty of rest, care and TLC while they recover. Although their rehabilitation will take time, our aim is for both dogs to eventually return to their owners once they are fully healed.

One of the needs we have increasingly encountered during our outreach work is something as basic as adequate shelter. During our most recent rabies campaign, we came across two dogs whose living conditions left them desperately in need of protection from the elements.

In response to this need, GCAW has started making kennels to provide much-needed shelter for dogs in the community. The two dogs we encountered during the rabies campaign have now been provided with kennels raised off the ground on pallets, helping to keep them



warmer and drier. They also have straw mattresses, lovingly hand-made by Erica, as well as donated blankets. This is a wonderful example of how community donations can make a very real difference.

Food, blankets and other items donated to GCAW are used purposefully throughout our outreach campaigns, ensuring that assistance reaches animals who need it most.

We also provide longer running chains for dogs that we find are permanently chained up. While we would always prefer animals to have the freedom to move safely, a longer chain can at least provide some additional space and freedom of movement for dogs whose circumstances mean they cannot currently be allowed to roam freely. Our work doesn’t stop when the kennels are closed either. GCAW continues to field calls and provide 24/7 assistance for animals in need. Sometimes that means responding to an urgent situation, sometimes providing advice, and sometimes simply helping an owner find a way to improve the circumstances of an animal in their care.

Every one of these services is made possible through the generosity of our community. Whether you donate food, blankets, materials, money or your time, your contribution helps us respond when an animal needs us.

And, of course, if you are looking for a new companion, please don’t forget the dogs waiting patiently at our kennels. They are still hoping that someone will walk through the gate and realise that their perfect match has been waiting for them all along.

Thank you for continuing to support GCAW and for helping us care for the animals in our community. Contact Virginia on 082 804 8928.

By Kitt Du Preez

Not All Treasure Is Buried! Discovering the World of Geocaching at Himeville Fort & Museum

By Kitt Du Preez

When we think of treasure hunting, we might imagine pirates, buried chests, old maps and perhaps an adventurous explorer or two. But treasure hunting has entered the modern age, and today you don’t need a shovel or a treasure map to go searching for hidden treasure. All you need is a smartphone, a sense of adventure and a little curiosity.

Welcome to the world of **geocaching**!

If you have never heard of geocaching before, you are certainly not alone. In its simplest form, geocaching is a worldwide treasure hunt using GPS technology. People hide small containers, known as *geocaches*, and record their locations using GPS coordinates. Other people then use those coordinates to navigate to the location and try to find the hidden cache.

And the treasure isn’t necessarily something you can take home. Some geocaches contain small items that can be exchanged, while others simply contain a logbook or piece of paper where the finder records their name, the date of their discovery, or perhaps leaves a short message. Our own geocache at Himeville Fort & Museum is one of these — a small cache hidden somewhere within the museum grounds, waiting to be discovered.

Finding a geocache can be surprisingly satisfying. The GPS coordinates may take you to the general area, but they don’t necessarily tell you exactly where to look. You might have to investigate your surroundings, examine your surroundings carefully and think about where someone might have chosen to hide a container. Once you find it, you sign the log and return the cache exactly as you found it.

There is even a special language among geocachers. A person who finds a cache may “log” their find, while someone who accidentally discovers a cache without knowing about geocaching is affectionately known as a “**muggle**”. There are different types of caches too, including those involving puzzles, clues or multiple locations.

Perhaps one of the most appealing things about geocaching is that it encourages people to **explore**. A geocache can be found almost anywhere — in towns, parks, along hiking trails, near landmarks and at places of historical interest. It can take you somewhere you have driven past countless times without ever stopping or encourage you to look more closely at a place you thought you already knew. This makes geocaching a particularly wonderful companion to tourism and heritage.

At Himeville Fort & Museum, our geocache adds a small modern adventure to a place steeped in history. Visitors can explore the Fort, discover its exhibitions and stories, and perhaps embark on a little treasure hunt of their own.

There is also something rather fitting about leaving your name in the logbook. Museums are places where we preserve the stories and memories of people from the past. A geocache allows today’s visitors to leave a tiny record of their own visit behind — a small connection between one visitor and the many people who will come searching after them.

Geocaching also offers a wonderful way for families to explore together. Children can become the official “treasure hunters”, while adults can help with the navigation and clues. It turns a simple outing into an adventure and encourages everyone to look at their surroundings with a little more curiosity.

And perhaps that is the real treasure of geocaching.

It isn’t necessarily what is hidden inside the container. It is the journey to find it, the places you discover along the way, and the stories and memories you collect during the adventure.

So, the next time you visit Himeville Fort & Museum, why not look at the museum through a slightly different lens? Discover the history within the Fort, explore the grounds, and if you are feeling adventurous, see if you can find our little hidden cache. You never know what you might discover. Because **not all treasure is buried.**



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