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VOL:42 NO: 11
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026
FREE NEWSPAPER

the local collection
CHRISTMAS MARKET
12 DECEMBER
14:00 – 19:00
LOCAL MAKERS • FOOD • COFFEE • GIFTS
LIVE MUSIC • FAMILY FRIENDLY
ENTRANCE FEE: R25 ADULTS / CHILDREN OVER 2
9 MAIN ROAD
UNDERBERG
0792449601

It's that time of year again when we gather as a community to celebrate another year and support some amazing local businesses at our sixth 'The Local Collection Christmas market'.
From foodie delights to crafts, clothing, Christmas gifting, tasty treats and handmade goods; we do our best to bring you variety and quality. We are excited to once again bring the Caledonian pipe band as well as live music and some carols to bring in the festive cheer. Bring your comfy chair, blanket and spend the afternoon and evening enjoying the festivities with family and friends!



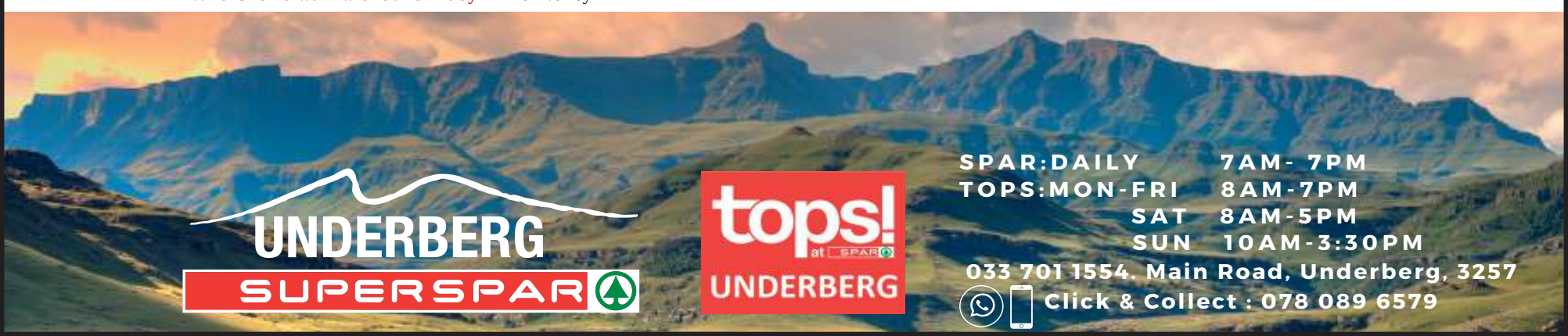






NOV 14	Sani Stagger info@Sanistagger.co.za
NOV 14	Underberg SUPERSPAR food and wine show@ Glencairn Farm 4 - 8pm Tickets R450 can be bought at in store cash office
NOV 14	FAB FAIR, live music and market stalls @The Priory, Himeville. Contact Michelle Pitman 072486 6895 for a table.
NOV 16 -25	Nursing Services Christmas Tree Fundraiser collection @ UNDERBERG SUPERSPAR. Banking details on page 2 if you can't get to SPAR
NOV 25	Last Quiz of the year contact Trish Scott 0660033773
NOV 28	Himeville Museum Christmas Market @Himeville Museum contact Kitt Du Preez 071 898 7892
NOV 28	Southern Drakensberg Tourism pairs Golf Day @Underberg Country Club EPIC Prizes to be won!!contact 033 701130
DEC 4 -6	Sani Seeker - Mountain bike race @ Glencairn For more information, and to enter, visit: saniseeker.co.za
DEC 5	SanI Round Table Touch Rugby Tournament contact Matt Hayes 0636828571
DEC 12	Christmas Market @ The Local Collection contact Lauren Perks 079 244 9601
DEC 13	Drak Kzn mixed doubles canoe championship Entries can be found at the Paddle Sport SA paddler portal
DEC 16	Mqatsheni Hiking club fun run and walk contact Mlbeni / Mgoza at 072 476 6080 / 074 636 3036
DEC 30	Non stop, one day Drak Challenge contact Chris Fann 082 903 9030
JAN 30 -31	N3TC Drak Challenge Entries are officially open on the Paddlesport South Africa portal
FEB 7	Sani Pass Wildflower walk
FEB 14	Wild Orchid walk with Julie Braby in Drak valley

UNDERBERG SUPERSPAR SUPPORTS COMMUNITY EVENTS WITH THIS SPACE



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Verse: Ezekiel 34:26b
'There will be showers of blessing.'
- What a wonderful picture of God's goodness: 'Showers of blessing!'
- The Lord delights in blessing and caring for His people.
- He can bring an end to dry seasons and send refreshing rain.
- Trust Him for His favour, renewal, and restoration.
PRAYER: Lord, thank You for Your promise of showers of blessing. Bring Your refreshing presence into every dry area of my life. I place my hope and confidence in You and trust in Your goodness. Amen.
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UNDERBERG NURSING SERVICES CHRISTMAS TREE FUNDRAISER

A gentle reminder that our annual traditional Christmas tree collection in lieu of Christmas cards to friends and family, will take place from Monday 16 th November – Wednesday 25th November 2026 at the Underberg Spar. For those not familiar with our organisation, we are a group of voluntary ex nurses who assist our community in caring for their loved ones at home. We provide non disposable equipment as required in each individual case, on a give and return basis. The service is free, but donations are gladly received. Your generosity affords us the ability to upgrade our equipment.
For those of you who are not 'out and about' and wish to donate, perhaps you would consider doing an EFT directly into our account.
All donor names will be published in the December edition of the Mountain Echo.
FNB UNDERBERG – BRANCH CODE: 221025 – ACCOUNT NO.: 5887 377 4914

UNDERBERG NURSING SERVICES CHRISTMAS TREE FNB UNDERBERG – BRANCH CODE: 221025 – ACCOUNT NO.: 5887 377 4914

Notice In respect of a license application in terms of the Petroleum Products Act, 1977 (Act No 120 of 1977)

This notice serves to inform parties that may be interested or affected that KOKSTAD TRUCK STOP (PTY) LTD, hereinafter referred to as the applicant has submitted an application for a RETAIL license, application number E/2026/10/23/0001.
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1 MAIN ROAD
UNDERBERG
UNDERBERG
The purpose of the application is for the applicant to be granted a license to undertake petroleum retailing activities as detailed in the application.

Arrangements for viewing the application documentation can be made by contacting the Controller of Petroleum Products by:
- Telephone. (031) 335 9635; or
- Fax , or
- Email:
Mapholisa.Tshisikhawe@dmpr.gov.za
Any objections to the issuing of a license in respect of this application. which must clearly quote the application number above, must be lodged with the Controller of Petroleum Products within a period of twenty (20) working days from the date of publication of this notice. Such objection must be lodged at the following physical or postal address:
Physical address:
The Controller of Petroleum Products
Department Mineral Resources & Energy
Mansion House, 12 Joe Slovo Street,
Durban, 4001
Postal address:
The Controller of Petroleum Products
Department Mineral Resources & Energy
Private Bag X 54375, Durban, 4000

Peta Parker Properties
Peta Parker Properties
Office - 033 701 1777
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Email -
info@ppproperties.co.za



LOWER LOTENI R20 000 000
EXCLUDING VAT
Situated on the Lower Loteni road, this 1400ha farm offers 3 modern houses that is upscale accommodation for holiday makers, providing a respectable income for the farm owner. There is also an old farmhouse with four bedrooms, a new style farm shed, and labour housing. 40 hectares of Eragrostis contribute to winter feeding. 23 camps with natural water in each camp. There is one damn which needs repair, and several streams on the property.



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UNDERBERG R100 000
Modern country estate with 2 catch and release dams, a swimming pool, tennis court, and clubhouse, this is the perfect place to build your tranquil home. The Meadows Country Estate has the most spectacular views of the Drakensberg range, and this piece of land sits on 900 sqm, providing the perfect space to build your dream home.

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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

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

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)

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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DECEMBER 4
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DECEMBER 11


MOUNTAIN ECHO BASED IN UNDERBERG facebook page for photos

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Photo: Anthony Grote.

14 NOVEMBER

SANI STAGGER 2026

PRESENTED BY LIGHTHOUSE GROUP

ITAGGER GRAVEL BY SALOMON

2065 m SANI STAGGER 1556 m

STAGGER TRAIL

The Sani Stagger **Presented by Lighthouse Group** takes place on the 14th of November with over 1500 runners spread across the 5 events on offer. Based at Premier Resort Sani Pass runners get to tackle either the traditional 42km or 21km runs on the Pass, the two trail run distances of 21km and 38km or the lung busting 16km Stagger Gravel by Salomon that conquers the gravel section of the Pass above the SA Border Post. Proudly presented by the Lighthouse Group and with apparel by Salomon the Stagger packs the District to the seams with runners, spectators and supporters and is deeply grateful for all the support it gets from local volunteers and the community in general. With the 5 runs on offer plus the Clouds of Hope 5km Fun Run/Walk at 07:30 on Saturday morning and the Spar Food & Wine at Glencairn on Saturday evening there is something for everyone. The Stagger Team looks forward to hosting another successful weekend of mountain running in this adventure mecca of South Africa. Running Man Adventures

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(Editor's Note. I asked Sani Pharmacy to quote on my medication and saved a few hundred rands)

Talking to the ancestors.

doncguy59@gmail.com

I booked a spot in a graveyard the other day not for me (yet), actually it's for a headstone I had engraved for the folks. I thought, we could have a chat every now and then. If I had one question for my father it would be - "How on earth are we going finish your book ? " The beginnings of his Dumisa kaMvenya story were on his computer when he died nearly 20 years ago.



Robin Guy talking abou Dumisa in the upper Mkomas valley to an informal audience of academics and his friend Bev Foster an Eastwolds farmer from further down the Mkomas river.

Dumisa kaMvenya died in Bulwer 150 years ago from pneumonia. Legend has it that he had 28 wives, a measure of some wealth and status. The Duma people are scattered throughout the province but founder Dumisa is buried on a magnificent site close to the settlement we know as Stepmore, more specifically KwaThunsi . Martin Duma descendant of an important Duma lineage down country suggests that 'A lot more work has to be done'.

Martin was part of an entourage that collected at Dumisa's gravesite at the end of October. He is descended from chief Sawoti a Duma lineage associated with Izimpethu zendhlovu (maggots of the elephant) Mzinto region. With so many descendants the commemoration attracted Duma family from KZN and beyond, it happens every year. This year 150 yrs after Dumisa kaMvenya's death, I got a special invite, my father would have approved, I remember all too well representative Duma people near the front row at his memorial service at St. Michaels in Himeville nearly twenty years ago.

Roll back 160 years one of Dumisa's son's Sakhayedwa settled below Hlogoma mountain, my parents lived on the site hence his burning interest. Early travelers record having obtained milk there and there's a record of settlers from the Ndawana farming community taking protective shelter with a 'wealthy native' in Underberg during the Basuto Gun wars in the early 1880's. Hlogoma's Sakhayedwa is recorded in a Natal newspaper following up on a bushman cattle raid into Lesotho in the 1860's, a captive bush girl was handed to a missionary near today's Ixopo. The occupation of land on the edge of the Drakensberg was a convenience for the colonial authorities at that time, Bushman cattle raids where hampering it's expansion. Dumisa's people were interpreted as a buffer, he was well poised because he had lived amongst the Botwa's as they were known during Shaka's scattering, the Mfecane. Says Martin Duma; Dumisa protected the remaining scatterings of bushman by telling them that they were part of the Duma people.

Writes my father; Dumisa and his sister Nomtshapane had been succoured by Bushmen, and Dumisa was proving an apt apprentice in the art of hunting using poisoned spears. The whites, the blacks and the apricoty yellow Bushmen had a comment interest. In elephants. If ivory was Natal's wealth for whites, an elephant carcass for the Nguni and the Bushman was survival, and the focus of social life. The mfecane which had emptied Old Natal of habitations, at the same time created a temporary elephant arcadia ripe for the plucking.

Dumisa was certainly confident of his authority in the region, he had earned it. The likes of ivory trader Nathaniel Isaacs and Henry Francis Fynn had used his services and he theirs. Dumisa's disdain for colonial imposed authority on him is recorded as such. An colonial official letter to him concerning a dispute over some cattle elicited this response to the messenger: '....is this the scrap of paper you suppose will protect you – does not the Englishman know who I am? I am known even in Grahams Town .... who fetches scraps of paper for me had better remove my country or I will put him to death – and you messenger do you suppose you cannot die because you have got that scrap of paper – your death would not prevent me talking afterwards .... saying .... the.... party rushed upon us with sticks ....'

In the 1880's post Zulu war there was a land upheaval, the Mkomas valley was surveyed, Kwa Thunzi where Dumisa is buried was sold to an Edendale land owner Stephanus Mini and other land up the valley to Edendale 'crown loyalists' accustomed to the notion of title deeds, some had participated in the Zulu war. Sakhayedwa facilitated the establishment of Reichenau Trappist mission on the Pholela river with the understanding that his people would benefit from an education with their conversion to Christianity. I once found a reference to his declaring " I would like my people to learn about the flies on the paper".

There is no photograph of him but he is commemorated in a stained - glass window at Centicow mission near Creighton, he died in Harding where he relocated , a Duma chieftainship exists there to this day.



Kwa Thunzi the burial site of Dumisa kaMvenya was acquired with AMAFA's assistance by the Duma tribe again in the early 2000's, the inscribed monument on the site adjacent to the ancestral grave is a cultural landmark. Perhaps more interesting is the actual grave itself. During the proceedings I snuck off for some Photographs and found ***a lady from Mzimkhulu praying at the site with her two daughters.*** During the course of the afternoon I was requested to take countless photographs of Duma descendants posing at the gravesite. The economic and cultural diversity of the Duma folk was evident on this day, as the only European attending the event I was received with tremendous generosity. ***A brass band from down country*** provided entertainment a spectacle , speakers recalled their interpretations of their ancestor and belly's were filled, I'm still recovering.



A descendent blows his own trumpet and another in prayer beside Dumisa's grave site. I quote from my father writings ; In accordance with Nguni practice he would have been ceremonially buried at the cattle kraal, the isibayi, and committed to his ancestors. An Nguni life is a celebration of both biological and cultural genes. Like those genes it has no beginning and no ending – so long as there are descendants and proteges. During life there was no escaping a destiny rooted in the past; you are who you are because of your ancestors, and you are in thrall to the cultural genes of ordained authority.

Don Guy is a Filmmaker/Artist hiking and cultural hiking guide in the Southern Drakensberg, he writes regularly for the Mountain Echo on a variety of topics. 066 018 6430.

Footnote; A sketch map of In 1864 commissioned by Governor Scott describes what tribes were thought to reside and where in Natal prior to 1812 before the disturbances of the Mfecane. The Nguni people and their herds penetrated the interior towards the Drakensberg up the warmer, drier, fertile, wooded sweetveld valleys – to the limit of the thorn country. The amaTholo -Thunzi people had their ancient domicile here; until the domino effect of the amaZulu King Shaka's foreign policy denuded the region of formal habitations.



UNITED WE SING 2026

Idols SA winner Jason Hartman joins young KZN singers on their journey to Germany

First passports, new friendships and the joy of sharing South Africa with the world: through BE YOUR OWN HERO and its exchange partners, young singers from KwaZulu-Natal are preparing for a journey that reaches far beyond the stage. UNDERBERG, KWAZULU-NATAL — It was the speed at which the German learners picked up the isiZulu lyrics that amazed Jason Hartman. In just one week of rehearsals in Underberg, teenagers from two countries were discovering how much they could share through music — even when the words were new to them. Hartman describes the rehearsals as tremendous fun and is eagerly looking forward to the group's time in Germany. Above all, he is excited about representing South Africa together with the young people — sharing their music, their energy and the spirit of home.

UNITED WE SING 2026 brings together 15 young people from the Underberg/Himeville region and 15 from Wolfsburg, Germany. Building on an earlier exchange in 2023, this year's project creates a new opportunity for young people to explore one another's cultures and perspectives through music. The South African choir includes learners from Kwamvimbela High School in Umqatsheni, near Underberg, and Dlangani High School, as well as young people from Clouds of Hope Christian Care Centre. BE YOUR OWN HERO South Africa, working with BE YOUR OWN HERO in Germany and the project partners, helps bring these young people, their communities and the musicians together. Both choirs share the name UNITED WE SING. The South African singers explored German songs while their visitors learnt to sing in isiZulu. There were unfamiliar sounds to practise, moments of laughter and opportunities to help one another. Between the melodies, friendships began to grow. For the South African participants, another milestone followed: visa applications, fingerprints and the feeling of holding their passports in their hands for the first time.

The prospect of boarding an aeroplane, discovering another country and sharing their own culture was becoming real. They would be taking more than songs with them: their rhythm, their joy for life, their curiosity and their pride in being South African.

They are not preparing for that journey alone. Alongside Hartman, Patrick Mbele and Mkhanyiselwa Ernest Nzimande are sharing their musical knowledge Joining them is drummer Sfundo Sandiso Phiwokwakhe, who forms part of Patrick and Ernest's musical team. Jazz and pop musician Grace Botha brings her own performance experience. Ernest, has been making maskandi music since 1988. "I want to share my skills with the next generation and help them develop confidence, creativity, and teamwork," he says. An original song, "BE YOUR OWN HERO", developed with Patrick and Ernest, will form part of the planned programme in Germany. This year, the choirs are preparing for "Dreams and Visions", a joint production at **Scharoun Theater Wolfsburg on 18 December 2026**, exploring the young participants' hopes and perspectives through music and performance. BE YOUR OWN HERO hopes that more audiences in South Africa will have the opportunity to hear the choir, and that new interest and support will help the musical work with these young people continue beyond the exchange.With heartfelt thanks to the German supporters, the South African musicians and everyone contributing time, care and encouragement, the group is preparing for its next step.Their passports are new. Their voices, their rhythm and their pride in where they come from are already their own. Together, UNITED WE SING. **By Sandra Wukovich Photo Slindile Sisibo**

For competitive youngsters, families and those new to mountain bike stage racing: Sani Seeker is here

4 - 6 December

The inaugural Sani Seeker, a two day mountain bike stage race scheduled for September, was postponed due to poor weather, so there is still an opportunity to enter and enjoy a fantastic weekend of mountain biking at Glencairn farm, home to a host events such as Glencairn Trail Run, Awaken Yoga Festival, KAP sani2c and more.



Designed for riders of every level, Sani Seeker is a two-day Mountain bike stage race based at Glencairn Farm. Whether you're a junior rider taking on your first stage race, a family looking for a memorable weekend together, an e-biker, or someone who's always wanted to experience the magic of a stage race, Sani Seeker is the perfectintroduction. With approximately 50 km of riding each day, a fully kitted-out race village, the warm, homely hospitality you've come to expect from events at Glencairn Farm, Sani Seeker is all about making stage racing achievable, affordable and most importantly, fun. The new dates are 4-6 December 2026, and Glencairn Farm is situated on the Sani Pass Road, Himeville.

For more information, and to enter, visit: saniseeker.co.za



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Birds and Beyond...



Trout caught on the Umzimkulu river

TROUT FISHING IN UNDERBERG

ByDuane Vaughn Howell. Contact 0832286707 or 0655232877

The lack of consistent rain and the heat that creeping closer is not conducive to stable river conditions. Rivers are on the warm side and water temperature quickly moving into the top of the trout comfort temperatures. The trout then move into deeper cooler water, shaded undercuts and into faster moving riffles where the turbulent quick moving water hold more dissolved oxygen. Rainbow trout do well in temperatures of between 12 and 18 degrees Celsius. Going beyond the higher range they become lethargic and stop feeding. Best times to target them would be early mornings before the sun has chance to heat the water. Not many good reports of the anglers fishing rivers with few fish being netted. UHTFC stats show null fish from 16 rods which could be wrong due to anglers not recording returns. Anglers are encouraged to complete these to have more accurate statistics. Not all bad news as some reports of good fish hooked and some landed on private beats, although far and few between the size makes up for the effort. Streamers making up for most fish landed. These fished on sinking lines past undercuts and in deeper sections and pools on the rivers. With the lower flows its always worth casting a dry into the pockets and riffles to temp a fish as well. This working well for the upper sections of the rivers where the water also a little cooler. Let's hope for more consistent rains.

The Stillwaters have been fishing well. Reports from anglers fishing private as well as club water tells of some good days out fishing. Some decent sized fish also being netted. Two fish of 60cm caught in club waters along with some good numbers brought to net on good days. Most of the fish caught were deeper and anglers had to fish fast sinking lines to get to the fish quicker. Flies reported working best were streamers in Olive. Leeches and Buggers standing out from the rest. Club statistics show 34 fish caught from 61 rods. Biggest a Rainbow trout of 60cm. Anglers fishing club water also encouraged to log their catch returns. With the heat warming up the dams some reports already came in from fish mortality post-fight due to warmer water temperatures. It is wise to fish early mornings when water a little cooler thus reducing stress to fish. Keeping fights shorter and fish in the water when handling is also a good idea. I am hoping to get some good reports come in. Tight lines.

.Underberg Flyfishing and lifestyle centre at The Clocktower Centre. - Contact 0832286707 or 0655232877 Duane Vaughn Howell. Check out our website at uhtfc.org





We have mountain bikes available for hire Monday to Sunday from our Lesotho On Track office. There are some really beautiful local cycling routes to explore, perfect for visitors wanting to get outdoors, see a little more of the area and enjoy it all at your own pace. Downloadable route maps are also available, allowing guests to head out and explore with ease.
R500 per person / day Shop 21, Troutwalk Centre 072 900 2304
A shuttle service can also be arranged at an additional cost if needed.



From the Southern Drakensberg to Italy, Sani 152 takes its place among the Top Three Round Tables in the World.



By Michael Beghin and Bud Manthe | Sani 152

If someone had told us a few years ago that we'd be travelling from Underberg to Italy to represent our little Round Table club on the world stage, we'd probably have asked them what they'd been putting in their coffee. But there we were, two farmers from the Southern Drakensberg, swapping the rolling green hills of home for the streets of Piacenza, Italy, and joining more than 1,700 delegates from around the world at the Round Table International (RTI) World Meeting. And what an experience it was!

Of course, we went to represent Sani 152, our region and our country. We went for the fellowship, the friendships and the opportunity to meet fellow Tablers from across the globe. But let's be honest. The prospect of a week in Italy, with its famous pizza, pasta, wine and hospitality, wasn't exactly a hardship either!

When in Italy, do as the Italians do! Life in Underberg tends to revolve around the weather, the farming calendar and whatever job needs doing next. There's always something to fix, something to move or something that should probably have been done yesterday. In Italy, we discovered a rather different approach to life. Food is an event. A meal isn't something you rush through before getting back to work. It's an opportunity to sit down, enjoy yourself and have a proper conversation. And just when you think you've eaten enough, someone arrives with another course.We may have travelled to Italy as representatives of Sani 152, but we certainly weren't going to leave without doing our bit to support the local food industry!

More than 1,700 Tablers, one big family. Jokes about food aside, the RTI World Meeting was a remarkable gathering. With more than 1,700 delegates representing Tables from around the world, it was an opportunity to experience the true international spirit of Round Table. One of the things that makes Round Table so special is how quickly strangers become friends. It doesn't matter where you're from, what language you speak or what you do for a living. There's a shared understanding that brings people together. You can be sitting with someone from the other side of the world, hearing about their community, their projects and their lives, and before long, it feels as though you've known them for years. For us, coming from a small farming community in KwaZulu-Natal, that international connection was particularly special.

We were reminded that although our communities may look different, the things that matter are remarkably similar. Friendship, service, family and making a difference where we can are values that travel well beyond borders. And, as we discovered, so does a good sense of humour!

Underberg makes the world stage!

While the Italian hospitality made the trip memorable, there was another reason for us to return home exceptionally proud. **Sani 152 placed among the Top Three Round Tables in the World!**

Let that sink in for a moment. We're a small Table based in the Southern Drakensberg, in a community better known for its farms, mountains, trout fishing and unpredictable weather than for producing internationally recognised Round Table clubs.Yet there we were, standing alongside Tables from around the world and representing Sani 152, our region and the Natal South Coast Association (NSCA). We didn't take home the overall first-place prize, but placing in the Top Three internationally is an achievement we are incredibly proud of.

It reflects the commitment of our members, the projects we've undertaken and the work that goes into making a difference in our community.

For a small club, it's a tremendous honour. More importantly, it's recognition that the work we do here in Underberg matters beyond our own backyard.

We might not have the biggest membership or the biggest town behind us, but we have a fantastic group of men who are willing to roll up their sleeves, get involved and make things happen.

Sometimes that means raising funds, sometimes it means putting in the hours, and sometimes it means coming up with an idea that sounds questionable at first but somehow turns into a successful project.

Those who know Sani 152 will know exactly what we mean!

We were immensely proud to fly the NSCA flag on the international stage and represent Round Table Southern Africa among some of the best Tables in the world.

It's an achievement that belongs not just to the two of us who made the trip, but to the entire Sani 152 family and everyone who supports what we do.

A little perspective from two farmers

Travelling to Italy gave us the opportunity to see the world from a different perspective.

It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day challenges of work, family and community life. There's always another task on the list, another problem to solve or another commitment to honour.

Sometimes, you need to travel a few thousand kilometres to appreciate just how connected we all are.

The friendships made, the experiences shared and the opportunity to learn from other Tables were just as valuable as the international recognition.

We returned home with fresh ideas, new friendships and a renewed appreciation for the organisation we're fortunate enough to be part of.

We also returned with a healthy appreciation for Italian cuisine, although whether our waistlines would agree is another discussion entirely.

There's no place like home

As wonderful as Italy was, there's something special about coming home to the Southern Drakensberg.

The mountains are still standing, the farms are still calling, and we're fairly certain the work hasn't done itself while we were away.

There's a certain comfort in returning to familiar surroundings, catching up with the people at home and getting back into the rhythm of everyday life.

Italy gave us an experience we'll never forget, but Underberg remains a pretty special place to call home.

We're incredibly grateful to everyone who made the RTI World Meeting such a memorable experience and to the members of Sani 152, NSCA and Round Table Southern Africa for their continued support.

Representing our club and region was an honour. Placing among the Top Three Round Tables in the World was a proud moment we'll remember for a long time.

And if there's one thing we've learnt from the whole experience, it's this:

You can take two farmers out of Underberg, send them to Italy, surround them with 1,700 Tablers and feed them pizza and pasta for a week — but eventually, they'll still want to come home to the farm. Although, given the opportunity, we wouldn't say no to going back for another helping!

Michael Beghin and Bud Manthe
Sani 152 | Round Table Southern Africa

Southern Drakensberg Community Tourism Organisation

It's Open Gardens Weekend. Feedback is that the gardens are spectacular. It's wonderful that an event celebrating everything our district has to offer – fresh air, views, walking, good food, new friends and memories – is complemented by gardens filled with varied and unique flora. Thank you to everyone who opens their gardens - your teams hard work, vision, commitment and passion is very much appreciated.

A reminder to visitors that two of our members cultivate and sell indigenous plants: Heritage Plants along the Drak Gardens Road and Giant's Cup Cafe along the Sani Road. Work on the R617 appears to be progressing, but concern remains that sections already repaired are needing attention again. While the excessive rain has not helped, the quality and longevity of the project remain a concern.

We are actively assisting members experiencing red tape with municipal business licences. If you are affected, please contact Sphamandla or a committee member. The matter is being escalated, and while there are processes to follow, members can be assured that we are working on it. Marketing the CTO and driving traffic to our platforms and website have been key discussion points. A new concept, "Meet Our Members", introduces members through categories including Restaurants and Local Flavours, Crafts, Gifts and Shopping, Walking, Hiking and Trails, Sport, Heritage and Family Outings. Watch our Facebook and Instagram pages.

We encourage members to spread the word and invite friends, colleagues and family to join the CTO. We also welcome the wider community. With numbers, we become a stronger voice and a force to be listened to. Coming up are the epic Sani Stagger and the much-loved My SPAR Underberg Food and Wine Show, back by popular demand. Tickets are R450. Book via WhatsApp on 078 089 6579.

The SDCTO and Tidy Towns are proud beneficiaries of the Food and Wine Show. The synergy between these two organisations is something special. Support the show and support your community! Thank you Ian Knox team. We are proud to be associated. To join the CTO, contact any of our committee members.

IMPORTANT UPDATE WHEN VISITING LESOTHO

With immediate effect, Sani Top (Sani Mountain Escape) has increased its daily access fee from R200 to R300 per person. All visits must be pre-booked and paid for online at www.sanimountain.co.za before arriving at the lodge entrance.

There is another CTO member at the top: Masoba-Soba Lodge. Contact them via WhatsApp on +26663115786.

Sani Pass Border post hours: 6am to 6pm

ANNOUNCEMENT AND NOTICE FOR OUR AGM

18 November 2026 Time: 16:00 Venue: Underberg Country Club

We encourage all members and the public to attend.





Preserving History, Building Community: A Look Inside Himeville Museum

By Reine Combrinck

Jane Leppan with guest speaker Kit Du Preez



Members and guests gathered for the monthly Country Women's meeting on 4 November, where **Kit du Preez** delivered an engaging presentation detailing the dedication, history, and behind-the-scenes effort required to run the local Himeville Museum.

Growing up in the farming community of Eston and spending most of her childhood in the Loteni Valley, Kit developed an early appreciation for the Drakensberg region. After completing her schooling in Howick, she pursued a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in history. Though initially considering a path in journalism, her love for historical preservation proved to be her true calling. "Ever since I was a child, I've been obsessed with museums," Kit shared, reflecting on how a childhood passion eventually shaped her career.

Following years of work in office administration, bookkeeping, and corporate finance, Kit joined the Himeville Museum team nearly eight years ago, succeeding Louise Rodrick as curator last year. Expressing her enthusiasm for the role, Kit noted that managing the museum never feels like work. She highlighted the strength of her small, dedicated team, including assistant curator Nokwazi, who joined last year and leads youth educational outreach, school visits, and social media marketing, as well as Vusi, who maintains the grounds, gardens, and general facility maintenance.

Kit explained the substantial administrative responsibilities involved in keeping the museum compliant and funded. Operating as a registered institution under a volunteer board of trustees, the museum receives a government subsidy through the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. The grant assists with core operational expenses, property insurance, utilities, and recent initiatives such as upgrading the museum's website. In exchange, the team completes comprehensive quarterly financial reporting and undergoes regular audits and annual collection inspections from Provincial Museum Services in Pietermaritzburg to ensure artifacts are stored, catalogued, and preserved correctly.

The presentation also showcased recent updates to the museum's public displays. Following the completion of the rock art exhibition curated by Louise Rodrick, Kit has been developing a revolving military history exhibition. The current display focuses on World War II and the Border War, supported by artifact donations and funding from the MOTHs to print detailed display panels. Future iterations of the display will cover the First World War and the Anglo-Boer War, spotlighting local soldiers from the area. Meanwhile, Nokwazi recently completed a display in the traditional Zulu art and craft room featuring an interview and beadwork items from her grandmother, and is currently working on restoring narrative displays within the historic workshop tool shed.

Beyond curating artifacts, the museum actively engages with the community through school visits, welcoming learners from local institutions such as Underberg Primary and Faithway. Community events and fundraising initiatives remain essential for supporting ongoing maintenance on the 130-year-old historic building, including a major roof restoration completed last year. Key events include the annual Spring Walk through the nature reserve, participation in local Open Gardens events, and the upcoming annual Christmas Market.

Kit concluded her talk by inviting community members to visit and enjoy the museum grounds, noting that the peaceful courtyard and gardens offer a quiet spot for locals and visitors alike. Donations of second-hand items and clothing for the Christmas Market White Elephant stall remain welcome at the museum during operating hours.

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



"THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC…,"

I was thrilled to be at ST MICHAEL's MAKES MUSIC.

The Dillon trio of Andy, Linda and daughter Bronwyn, plus their "son" Neil Prior, were that delightful and rare treat of live performance in the packed UCC dining room.

Andy and Neil's banter and sense of humour (Andy's dentist song is a classic), Linda's fine touch on the keyboard, all the harmonising, the golden songs, and Bronwyn's beautiful voice - every word crystal clear - and her natural relaxed enjoyment of the songs and her audience, all these made my night.

Add to that, sharing the pleasure with so many precious Underbergers.

I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

Article & Photo By Rae Higgins









SANI COMMUNITY FORUM
By Di Sunter

"DEMOCRACY WORKS WHEN THERE IS A PEACEFUL TRANSISTION OF POWER AFTER AN ELECTION – ESPECIALLY FROM ONE POLITICAL PARTY TO ANOTHER." CHRIS WALLACE.

THE LAND OF NUD: "A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL."

The quote by Chris Wallace, the journalist, with reference to a peaceful transition of power, remind us that democracy is tested not only at the ballot box, but in how we live and work together afterwards. Our ambition should be clear: to make our "Land of NUD" the most desirable place in South Africa to call home—not only for those who may move here, but for every person who already belongs here. Unity through diversity must be our foundation: different backgrounds, cultures and political views, joined by a shared love for our villages and a determination to help them thrive.

The local government election held on 4th November produced no outright winner. Coalitions must now be formed, but the purpose of those negotiations must reach beyond political arrangements. They must help Dr NDZ Municipality turn its mantra, "A better place for all," into an everyday reality.

After thirty years of one party holding a majority, the move towards coalition government offers the opportunity to usher in a new era of oversight. A long-standing majority can encourage unilateral decisions, leaving too little room for challenge and debate—a pattern that does not serve democracy well. Coalition government must now make space for questioning, scrutiny and shared decision-making. Its promise is stronger accountability, but that promise will only be fulfilled if coalition partners hold one another to account in the public interest, rather than simply protect one another's positions.

COOPERATION THAT DELIVERS. Cooperation, tolerance and commitment must guide coalition partners: work across party lines, listen respectfully to differing views and put the district ahead of party advantage. The goal is not agreement on everything, but agreement to serve everyone.

A coalition should be more than an agreement about positions. Its partners should set shared priorities, make their commitments clear to residents and take responsibility for delivering them. Constructive disagreement must lead to decisions and action, not become an excuse for delay.

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO OUR DISTRICT. A desirable place to call home must be a place where everyone feels included. Enforced Bylaws, safety and security, clean streets, functional services, cared-for public spaces and opportunities to earn a living should be ambitions we share across every part of our community. The promise of a better district must extend to all residents, not only the fortunate few. Care and compassion and Ubuntu should be extended to every resident.

Our district now deserves a leadership that listens, acts, honours its commitments and treats every single resident with respect. Whatever coalition emerges, its success should be measured by what it delivers for the community, not by which party claims the credit. We have given you our vote, so honour that and treat it wisely as the power still rests with the people.

INVESTMENT, TOURISM AND JOBS. It is not only investment that our villages need to feed our economy. Tourism is a large driver of our local economy, and a clean, functional and welcoming town can help us earn a far bigger slice of the tourism pie. Looking after our public spaces and making local government work must therefore be shared priorities.

Investment, tourism and new home buyers can bring fresh energy to our villages and feed local businesses, helping to create jobs and a thriving economy. They can also strengthen support for community-driven initiatives such as Tidy Towns, GCAW, Sani Community Forum, and Adult Literacy, amongst others. Growth must benefit the people who already call this district home, through opportunities to earn a living and stronger community support.

NEVER FORGET OUR FARMERS. We must never forget that we are an agricultural community. Without farmers, there is no food and few jobs available. Farmers and farm workers sustain us, while the businesses farmers use in our villages benefit from their spending, as too the money spent by their employees. As we welcome investment and visitors, we must also value and support this agricultural foundation. Agriculture and tourism must remain central to our vision for the district.

THANK YOU FOR AN ELECTION TO CELEBRATE. Our sincere thanks go to the IEC for a well-run election, and to the volunteers who gave their time and energy to help make it possible. Your massive contribution deserves our appreciation and that we will remember long after these elections.

Whatever party T-shirt people wore, and wherever they placed their cross, the communities of Underberg and Himeville came together in a spirit of unity, jubilation and celebration. We congratulate both communities on the festive atmosphere that prevailed during the election and the tolerance and respect extended to all sectors of our community. That spirit is something to celebrate—and to carry forward long after election day.

Let that spirit be a blueprint for unity through diversity throughout the Land of NUD. We need not be alike to belong together. By welcoming one another, caring for our villages and working together for safety, we can build a community that visitors want to return to, and new neighbours want to call home—without losing sight of those who already live here.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ELECTED WARD REPRESENTATIVES. We congratulate the newly elected ward representatives and wish them well in the responsibilities ahead. Ward 1 was retained by Mr Hamilton Skhumbuzo Milbeni, of the ANC, with the support of his loyal voters due to his service delivery and popularity. Wards 2 and 3 saw a change: Ward 3 went to newcomer Mr Tex Turton of the DA, who gained substantial support in the Underberg Low-Cost Village. In Ward 2, Cllr Rowena Aldous Trollope won support in Himeville Village and the adjacent Himeville Low-Cost Village but narrowly lost the ward overall to newcomer Mr Mdu Zulu, of the MKP. We wish all four well in their contributions to our community and call on those elected to serve with integrity, remain accessible and work across party lines. The wider message is clear: voters are entitled to demand service delivery rather than empty promises, and to choose the representatives they believe will deliver "A better place for all."

For residents of the Underberg and Himeville Low-Cost villages, "A better place for all" must mean a tangible improvement in daily life—and you, the voters, have spoken. The predominant support for Mr Tex Turton in the Underberg Low-Cost Village and Cllr Rowena Aldous-Trollope in the Himeville Low-Cost Village is, in our view, a powerful sign that residents felt their voices were heard and their faith restored. They looked beyond election promises and T-shirts towards representatives they believed would listen and act. That trust must now be honoured. Clean surroundings, safety, functional services and properly cared-for public spaces must reach these communities too. Our new representatives must treat that work as a priority, not an afterthought.

UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY: OUR FUTURE TOGETHER. The beauty of Underberg and Himeville should be matched by the warmth of our welcome and the care we show one another. Residents, farmers, businesses, community organisations and elected representatives, all have a part to play in making the Land of NUD, a place where people can belong, contribute and build a future for themselves and a better life for their children.

Making the Land of NUD the home people dream of, requires more than promises. It requires clean, functional, safe villages where law and order is a given, a thriving local economy and unity that embraces our diversity all underscored with respect. Bringing Dr NDZ Municipality's mantra, "A better place for all," to life means serving every resident, no matter on where they live. That commitment becomes especially tangible when a disaster strikes, and our community needs practical help.

SPECIAL THANKS: The service we ask of our elected representatives and Municipality matters most when residents need help. A special mention goes to Mr Wonderboy Dlamini, the Disaster Manager, and his team, who were called out last Saturday night during the storm when trees came down across the Sani Road near Himeville, and in Thomas Street. A fully functional, well-equipped disaster response team is vital for residents' safety when disasters strike. We also thank Cllr Rowena Aldous-Trollope and Mr Sifiso Mkhize of the Municipality, for their part in coordinating disaster and crisis responses in our towns, at all hours of the day or night. Thank you, Rowena, Sifiso and the Disaster Team, from us all. The peaceful transition described in our opening quotation is only the beginning: what follows must be cooperation that delivers, oversight that holds power to account and a community united through its diversity. From the ballot box to caring for our neighbours, let us make the Land of NUD a place people are proud to call home. "A better place for all"—and all must mean all.**SANI COMMUNITY FORUM**
By Di Sunter

The birth of Enclavation
doncguy59@gmail.com

I was leaving South Africa after a lengthy stay with my elderly mother. A flight was booked to Victoria Falls, I 'd make my way north overland to Ethiopia for an Africa trip I'd only imagined. I had a flight to catch, boetie was driving me to the airport, we're both journo's in different ways, he more on a coal face - he turned to me with a question; So what do you think? What are the biggest changes you've seen in your time away? (11 yrs) What's different ?

With my eyes on the road my reply - "Hey boet keep your eye on the road - I've got a plane to catch." I never answered the question - we hit a pothole! I'm careful when I ride that section of road to this day, it's between the old now dysfunctional railway siding and the Highbury store, badly drained with a decade old repair patches it's still waiting for the promised revamp. The first colonial administrators of the Pholela district lived there nearly 150 years ago. Long story short I missed my flight, the new rim cost boetie but I did manage half my trip through Africa - that's another story.

Back to the question: What I might have answered would have been something like this; ' South Africans have laagered, Verwoerd's apartheid policy set out to laager African tribes into Bantustans, we lived through that era and were freed now many South Africans have laagered themselves.'

Don't get me wrong it's not as black and white as you might think. There's an electronic mouthpiece called Common sense, I watch it. Headlines, data, scenario's and advise by subscription - Yes - Frans Cronje means business, a scenario thinker researcher and marketed as that. Cronje's lingo talks of 'enclaves'. ENCLAVATION is something he's 'catch - phrased' , a more inclusive term than the 'laager' idea.

The most extreme enclave in South Africa is Orania, I once went there out of curiosity - 'very neat'- Tidy is what I remember, it was a drive through so I didn't feel the mood nor the politics, the media tells it's story. There are many such places in South Africa - estates for one many of them walled and guarded, I live in one by default - no complaints. Beyond the gates is where we feed our minds and body and the 'trough' is safe for now. Our town has had it ups and downs and a very real threat in 2021 when private security and the immediate community protected looting and property destruction. This was a perfect example of how our enclave strengthened and was recognized as such . We who live in Underberg village have seen great strides since that time, but how long is it going to take to fix the sewage challenges, potholes , neglected public open space and the corner road near SPAR !!!?

On a lighter note, I recall a lunch conversation I recently had at the ' Thistle Hotel' in Pietermaritzburg (I recommend the curry). Sitting next to me a group of talkative Indian business guys asked me where I was from, I answered 'Underberg.' Ah they exclaimed " What is it about Underberg? Why is everyone talking about Underberg - what have you got?" Of course I waxed lyrical about the Beautiful Mountains and rivers on our doorstep, the security during the riots and the example of my mother living there peacefully very contented into her old age. " No" came an answer in unison from their table " It's your SPAR! ". I then recalled to them how within an hour of the onset of the looting in July 2021 the SPAR was barricaded and a community security forum established to secure the greater district. Our little town works it has hands on community involvement beyond government chaos and ineffectiveness. There is no definition as to how a 'South African enclave' works. In the bad old days one would have invited Clem Sunter to amuse with 'high and low road' scenario's - Well that's over. The barometer of regions and municipalities is best seen in the data, something Frans Cronje's 'common sense' utilizes and sells as a survival toolkit.

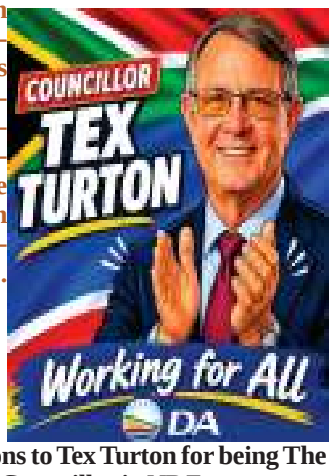


Oh! the cartoon, I almost forgot Tex Turton - DA candidate, Tex is in for Ward 3 in Underberg. He calls me a 'communist' (in fun) a name I acquired in the army because I voted and worked on a weekend off for the PFP in 1977, my gifted 'T -shirt' gave me away. Well the PFP morphed into the DA - post 1993 other parties died.

Nowadays there's little morphing it's all about coalition governance, a lot has to do with tolerance and recognition of the real challenges, the nuts and bolts - Water - Sewage - Lights - Safety - Procurement -

Corruption - Dormant Public spaces and those 'Holy' roads, I won't mention the railways yet, when that gets fixed I'll be the first on the train - and don't let that be a 'gravy train'.

Don Guy writes regularly for the Mountain echo, he is an artist and Film-maker and is very happy entertaining tourists on the Hiking Trails in the Southern Drakensberg - 066 018 6430. Underberg.



Congratulations to Tex Turton for being The first DA ward Councillor in NDZ

***EXTRAORDINARY PROFITS FROM ORDINARY SHARES**
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***INTERNATIONAL INVESTING FOR SOUTH AFRICANS**



Plan to THRIVE in 2026

International markets have been attracting South African Investors for decades. Many South Africans want to invest overseas, many already have and thousands add to their overseas investments every year.

The rewards are obvious. The returns are much higher, you harvest the diversification benefits from low correlations with emerging markets, foreign currencies are more stable and stronger (e.g. the Swiss Franc and New Zealand Dollar) and you obtain a level of political insurance.

Problematically most South Africans have the vast majority of their assets in South Africa and they are therefore denominated in rands. South Africa is classified as an emerging market and represents less than one percent of all investable markets. Conversely this means that more than 99 percent of the available universe of investments is ignored.

A further problem with emerging markets is that although at times they can show very strong growth, they all have a tendency to display extreme volatility. Circumstances can change quite rapidly as emerging markets mature and become sophisticated but they can also, unfortunately, experience devastating declines.

By moving some of your assets into mature markets (the United States, Europe and New Zealand), you gain the safety of diversification. Furthermore, you gain the opportunity to choose from a much wider asset class. Excellence and performance are not confined to a specific corner of the world. Superb managers work day and night wherever they may be and capitalize on every opportunity they find no matter where it is. If you search worldwide, you will find more growth investment opportunities than if you stick to only one country.

Of course, there are detractors, such as governments with exchange controls that discourage or forbid citizens to invest overseas. This, in itself, is a warning and should convince you.

As a country still striving to complete the democratization process and with a tax regime based on worldwide income, exchange controls have overstayed their welcome. Furthermore, how can we plausibly argue the viability of South Africa as an investment destination when we do not have the courage to completely scrap exchange controls.

Investing overseas remains a complex matter. The investment universe is huge. There are approximately 40 000 mutual funds and 10 000 large capitalisation stocks. Opportunity ranges from stocks to bonds, hedge funds and thousands of derivative products.

Each investment opportunity needs to be studied to determine its place and appropriateness in terms of characteristics of risk and potential return.

Also, unlike South Africa, overseas countries have many different markets. The US, for example, has a number of stock exchanges that have different trading methods and services. The main US markets are the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and the National Association of Security Dealers' Automated Quotations (NASDAQ).

The Nasdaq is typically home to high-tech companies and is totally computerised. Trading takes place via computers without a trading floor, similar to the system now used by the JSE.

The NYSE is home to the old economy smoke stack – type companies and operates in the old – fashioned way, where brokers and specialists trade on the floor of the exchange.

Notwithstanding the difficulty and trepidation of investing abroad, globalization increases daily. Foreign and local markets are increasingly integrated and investors who do not educate themselves and who are unfamiliar with international investments will find themselves at a growing competitive disadvantage.

When allocating investment capital, it is most important to stick to a trend against a back drop of emerging demographics. Studying these trends will immediately turn your focus on areas that are growing rapidly. The work from anywhere phenomenon, the increased competition for specialist staff, the increased stay at home emphasis, medical issues and an increased rate of obesity are just a few areas that are more significant now and must get more investment attention.

If you restrict your investment to South Africa, you will miss out on investments like Apple, Microsoft, Google, Facebook and Tesla. These companies are still great investments but there are many other smaller companies that are growing even faster.

These shares have gained hundreds of percentage points.

Companies like Nvidia and Apple are worth trillions of dollars. If you restrict your investments to the JSE you will miss out on this extreme wealth creation!

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 - 0796244031***

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Faithway's Foundation Phase play was an entertaining production in which every learner had a part. Grandparents, parents, siblings and friends packed the hall and thoroughly enjoyed the show.
FAITHWAY SCHOOL HIMEVILLE

Regression Therapy & Hypnosis

By Heidi Kyle

There is an excellent HBO miniseries released in 2023 called Love & Death, based on a true story. In it, the defence team for accused axe murderer Candy Montgomery used hypnotic regression therapy to explore the reasons why she "snapped" and killed her best friend with an axe. Amazingly, she was acquitted.

I say "amazingly" because hypnosis is generally not accepted as reliable evidence in court. Memories recalled under hypnosis can be influenced by suggestion and are therefore not regarded as legally dependable. However, in the therapeutic setting I have witnessed some remarkable and life-changing outcomes through regression therapy.

So, what is hypnotic regression therapy?

Often referred to as clinical hypnosis, regression therapy is based on the idea that certain fears, anxieties or emotional reactions continue to appear throughout life because of experiences during our earliest formative years—often before the age of three. During this period, the developing mind can form unconscious beliefs or conclusions about the world and about ourselves. These early decisions may then continue to influence thoughts, emotions and behaviour well into adulthood.

Clues that this may be happening for a client is when someone says, "This seems to be getting worse as I get older," or, "I've felt like this for as long as I can remember."

The theory is that the subconscious mind continues to reinforce these early beliefs by interpreting new experiences through the same emotional lens. Those beliefs may include feelings of being unloved, unworthy, abandoned or deeply fearful, even when the person cannot identify why. While our conscious mind may have little or no memory of those early experiences, the emotional patterns often remain.

Regression therapy provides a safe and supportive environment in which clients can explore the origins of these longstanding emotional patterns. The aim is not simply to recover memories, but to understand the meaning the individual has attached to past experiences and to release the emotional burden that may still be influencing their present life. Many clients are surprised by how straightforward the underlying issue can be, and they often describe feeling lighter, freer and more at peace afterwards.

Becoming qualified to practise regression therapy requires many years of specialised training. I am one of only two therapists in KwaZulu-Natal offering this approach, and it has become the cornerstone of my practice. Clients regularly travel long distances for treatment because they have found it to be a valuable part of their healing journey.

Hypnosis itself is a well-researched state of focused attention and deep concentration. It is widely used to help manage pain, reduce anxiety and support positive behavioural change. Regression therapy builds on these principles by following emotional patterns back to their possible origins. Exploring these experiences in a calm, relaxed state, together with the guidance of a skilled therapist, can help people gain new insight, challenge limiting beliefs and move forward with greater freedom and resilience.

Next month, as Christmas approaches, we'll explore practical ways families can strengthen their relationships, reduce tension and make the most of this special season together.

Heidi Kyle Certified Counsellor & Hypnotherapist Tel 082 386 1053
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HELP ERADICATE INVASIVE ALIEN PLANTS

This month I will highlight two common garden plants with yellow flowers that are of concern as they populate natural areas and take over from indigenous plants. St. John's Wort or Tutsan is a member of the Hypericum family and **Scotch Broom** Cystisus scoparius. These are listed as Category 1a which means they must be eradicated. St. John's Wort was introduced into the country from China and Scotch Broom from United Kingdom and Europe. For more detailed information on how to recognize them and the best way to deal with these plants please refer to the "Southern Drakensberg Invasive Alien Plants" booklet available at many outlets or direct from the Southern Drakensberg Honorary Officers who published it.

The Honorary Officer stand at the recent Underberg Lifestyle Show was voted the best on show. We wish to acknowledge the intense preparation for the exhibits. It was a great team effort with a culmination of ideas resulting in a winning combination; by Simon Acutt and Jacques Flamande who set up the horn and skull display and the anatomy dissection demonstration (loved by all the boys!) and Roger Spencer for bringing the display boards and hay bales, need special mention, which attracted so many people to visit. Our members gave time and effort to set up the stand and be on hand over two days to guide attendees around the display and take it down.

Mike and May Bloom have reported that the pair of Wattle Cranes are trying to raise another chick by nesting again. On 21st November the arrangement to clear fences and alien plants in the wetland will still take place. The nest site is far enough away for it not to be disturbed by this activity. It is hoped to provide a secure and safe environment for the fledgling once it leaves the nest to forage with the parents and when it starts to fly. For further details please contact Mike.

Number of people took part in the Museum Fund Raiser Walk on the path that had been cleared by HO's in Himeville Nature Reserve. Walking this path in the reserve should prove to be an enjoyable family activity in the weeks ahead with the added incentive of the bird hide and picnic site – all facilities have been upgraded by the Southern Drakensberg Honorary Officers.



The annual Sani Stagger race up Sani Pass takes place on 14th November. The HO's will welcome runners at our refreshment table at the SA Border Post. Ahead of this event they, with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife staff and, hopefully, Tour Guide fraternity will do a clean-up of the route. We appeal to all people in vehicles on the Sani Pass to carry litter bags instead of defiling the environment by throwing rubbish out of the windows and leaving view site areas filthy. Everyone going up the Pass should expect a clean road for themselves and in respect for other travellers.

The information display at the old White-Smith store complex is well worth a visit. It is at the bottom entrance to the Sani Pass and will add historical and environmental interest for people going up the Pass or just as a short half day excursion. There is big effort being made to remove exotic, invasive trees in the area so one must expect some necessary activity in the vicinity of the building housing the display during this process. It is the most convenient for storing and final removal of the logs.

For further inquiries about joining the group or offering assistance in any way please contact:- Chairman Julian Simon 0836516777 southerndrakensberg.chair@ezemveloho.com Secretary Cayla Beghin 0824932305 - southerndrakensberg.secretary@ezemveloho.com or Ezemvelo HOs.

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An African Adventure Finds a Welcome Stop at Glentowy Farm



Renowned South African explorer and humanitarian Kingsley Holgate and his expedition team recently made a special stop in the Southern Drakensberg, spending a night at Glentowy Farm near Underberg as part of their remarkable Following the Dragon expedition.

Few names in African exploration are as recognisable as Kingsley Holgate. Known for his extraordinary journeys across the African continent, Holgate has spent decades combining adventure, geographical exploration and humanitarian work, reaching some of the continent's most remote communities.

His latest expedition, Following the Dragon, is the Kingsley Holgate Foundation's 44th geographic and humanitarian expedition. Supported by Defender, the journey follows the magnificent Drakensberg mountain range from Iron Crown in Limpopo, in the north, to the historic village of Rhodes in the Eastern Cape Highlands.

The expedition takes in the extraordinary landscapes, history, geology, wildlife and cultures of the Drakensberg, with the team travelling through some of Southern Africa's most challenging mountain terrain.

Alongside the adventure is a strong humanitarian purpose. The Foundation's work includes malaria prevention, distributing reading glasses to people with impaired vision, supporting early childhood development centres and promoting wildlife conservation education in rural communities.

The expedition marks 25 years of partnership between Defender and the Kingsley Holgate Foundation, a relationship that has supported more than 40 expeditions across Africa.

During their journey through the Southern Drakensberg, the expedition team spent a night at Glentowy Farm near Underberg, enjoying the hospitality and tranquillity of the property before setting off on the next leg of their journey.

For the Underberg and Himeville community, having an expedition of this calibre pass through our region is a reminder of the remarkable landscape on our doorstep. The Southern Drakensberg is not simply a destination for visitors; it forms part of a much larger story of African geography, heritage, adventure and conservation.

As the Following the Dragon expedition continues southwards towards Rhodes, it carries with it stories of the mountains, the people and the communities encountered along the way.

And for Glentowy Farm, it was a pleasure to form a small part of this remarkable African journey.

By Matt Hayes

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cleaned up the historic Oak tree Cairn



and neatened up some of the oak trees

TIDY TOWNS

- *cleaned up the Cairn*
- *neatened up some of the oak trees*
- *planted 10 more azaleas at the Moths garden*
- *felling small gums and sprayed brambles in empty plot next to old Khanyeni, diagonally opposite Faithway.*

Well done Ruth Crouch & team

DON'T MAKE IT WORSE

By Llew Evans
retired vet



I have a vet friend in Westville named Steve Wimberley. Steve loves Facebook. He recently put out a post where he said he has saved thousands of animals and failed hundreds. This is a bit of an exaggeration and rather dramatic but it does highlight the issues vets deal with on a daily basis. The cases you can't solve or can't help. Maybe you missed something, or you were called in too late, just not knowing something or perhaps the owner won't let you go the extra mile. I remember to this day a Ridgeback dog with an advanced bone cancer , a case that I took over from Graham Murray, that the owner simply refused to put down.

On another occasion an owner brought me an 18 year old cat that could barely move and wanted me to just go on giving it cortisone injections. When I refused they stormed out. This is misplaced kindness. You need to look at the animal's feelings and quality of life.

Another vet friend, also in Westville, years ago told me his mantra was "Just don't make it worse". I think we vets, and our medical doctor colleagues, need to remember this. When you hit a brick wall with a case refer it to someone else. There is no shame in that. A fresh pair of eyes is always good. Finally we are in a unique situation when the pain and suffering get too mush we can put the animal to sleep. It is very much a judgement call but owners often try to influence your judgement. But you are the trained professional, not them. I remember my friend Tod telling me a story about how he was called to see a horse in terrible pain. He decided to put the horse down..then later was taken to task by the absentee owner.

A medical doctor recently told me about his 90 year old mother who had a fall. To be on the safe side, because she lived alone, they decided to keep her in hospital overnight for observation. While there they did some routine blood tests and found her potassium levels slightly elevated. So they decide to do a potassium wash out. This involves giving glucose and insulin at the same time to draw the potassium out of the cells. Potassium affects the heart…so they caused her to have a cardiac arrest and she had to be resuscitated ! Just don't make it worse !!

There is a lovely Greek word to this "Iatrogenic ". It means caused by the doctor. Which of us vets can say we have never overdosed an animal or put an irritating drug under the skin by mistake ? Hopefully without dire consequences.

Talking of 90 year olds, we know one old lady who fell in the shower one day badly bruising her shoulder, Because of her age the doctors were reluctant to do anything. She was in a lot of pain. Then someone suggested she try using dagga tea. When we saw her some time later, we asked "Did you try it ?" "Yes' she said "it was great ". "But where did you get the dagga ? "We people who live on the Bluff know about these things ". And in Underberg ??

One things every vet dreads is when a client comes in saying "He is just not himself ". In the words of that awful Kardasian "Where do we start ?" I guess the answer is to start at the beginning, or in a vets case, start at the end and stick a thermometer up his tail end. What a way to earn a living !

Seriously though you can then go back to the basics like mucus membrane colour, heart sounds and palpate the abdomen. Follow this with a blood smear – all simple to do but may prevent us making a quick assumption like "Oh there is a tick on the dog. He must have Biliary." Not necessarily.

Often more advanced tests are great but don't start there. Too many young vets expect the tests to make the diagnosis and start with R2000 of blood tests. Trust your own instincts.

Actually though it was the opposite that stopped me doing large animal work. I started as a State Vet in the Free State and it soon became obvious that because of the economics involved there was a limit in what could be done for the animals. It just did not make sense to the farmer. I am not talking about fancy stud animals here just the ordinary farm animal. It could get frustrating. Your vets must face this on a daily basis. Add that to the avalanche of paper work and pettiness….

Finally I drove out 70km to do a caesarean on a cow with a rotting calf inside her. With only a farm hand to help and the Free State dust blowing into the wound and all over the instruments I thought "James Herriot fibbed. I need to move into small animal practice. " But I do miss some things of those days..like going out to Clocolan in the middle of winter to bleed cattle and the farmer having to build a big fire next to us just so we could hold the needles. Man that was cold ! Those farmers were the salt of the earth and were a joy to visit. Generous to a fault.

We also did the local prison's piggery. Luckily no one, human or pig , escaped while we were there ! I must say the prisoners all looked quite comfortable and not too keen to move on.Till next time.

GCAW – December Bonanza Raffle and Adoption News

It is that time of year again, and GCAW is gearing up for its annual December Bonanza Raffle! Tickets are now on sale at R100 each, with the lucky draw taking place on Monday, 21 December.

There are some fantastic prizes up for grabs this year! First prize is a brand-new wheelbarrow overflowing with Christmas snacks, goodies and drinks – just in time for the festive season!

Other prizes include a mountain bike, a brand-new Vodacom tablet, accommodation and food vouchers, R500 meat packs, a bespoke wooden bird feeder, a beautiful handmade quilt and a bar accessories set.

Tickets will be on sale soon and we shall announce on local WhatsApp groups and social media platforms where the tickets can be purchased but look out for us at the Night Market on 12 December.

Please support this fundraiser if you can. GCAW has several large ongoing projects and substantial veterinary bills to cover, and every ticket sold makes a difference to the animals in our care. Your support really does help us continue the work we do. Looking for a new furry family member?

We will have kittens available for adoption in approximately two weeks. All kittens will have received their vaccinations and deworming before going to their new homes. Please contact Virginia for further information.

We also have plenty of adorable puppies and adult dogs looking for their loving forever homes. If you have room in your heart and home for a four-legged companion, please consider adopting rather than buying.

Please note that compulsory home checks apply to all kitten and puppy adoptions to ensure our little ones go to safe and suitable homes. For information about kitten adoptions, contact Virginia on 082 804 8928, and for puppy and adult dog adoptions, please contact Erica on 071 378 1672.

Thank you to our wonderful community for continuing to support GCAW. Whether through adopting, donating, buying raffle tickets or simply spreading the word, every little bit helps us make a difference! **By Kit Du Preez**



Thabani with his new pet and companion Rex

The annual Swartberg Stock theft Prevention Association (SSPA) Dekalb Fly-fishing Festival

The annual Swartberg Stock theft Prevention Association (SSPA) Dekalb Fly-fishing Festival took place in Swartberg from 15-18 October 2026. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our sponsors, dam owners, farmers, committee, SSPA members and fishermen for their contribution. Without their help, this event would not have been possible.

Receiving sponsorship for this event creates a unique opportunity for community members to raise funds to ensure the protection of livestock on both commercial and rural farms surrounding Swartberg, KZN. SSPA is a non-profit organization with the aim of preventing stock theft by guarding the Lesotho/South Africa border, creating a communication network with Lesotho residents, and maintaining an operational radio network between the two countries.

This festival hosts 70 fishermen from across the country, treating them to some of the best fly fishing in Southern Africa. The Fly-fishing festival plays a crucial role in raising funds to ensure the success of the SSPA. These costs include paying for guards, vehicles, uniforms, radios, ration packs, housing, fuel, legal and admin fees, insurance, the Thule Road and Hopewell Clubhouse maintenance and more. With your help we can protect the livelihood of farmers, both commercial and rural.

A big thank you to all the dam owners for opening their dams to us. Having access to these amazing dams is the backbone of this fundraiser. This year's Fly-fishing Festival was a huge success!

Fisherman arrived from near and far for a festive weekend. They gathered at Hopewell Dam clubhouse, owned by Dawie and Mariaan du Plessis, where the committee ladies provided delicious dinners. This year's weather was ideal; fishermen spent two days on the water in the hot sun without a breath of wind. They were spoiled with great fishing and beautiful sunsets. Hopewell Dam also hosted the Swartberg School kids' bass fishing competition on Saturday, making it a great day out for the whole family.

Thank you to **Dekalb** as the **Title Sponsor.**

Thank you to GP van den Berg for going above and beyond.

A special thank you to our **Major Sponsors:** Xplorer, Pioneer, AG Services, Shiptech, Kokstad Milling, Pannar, Farmers Agri Care, Syngenta, UPL, AFGRI Equipment, AFGRI Animal Feeds, Rigtech, KZN Beefmasters, Dorning Motors, Ecovite, Mahindra Zwartberg Garage, RPO KZN, Kynoch, Wild Fly and Gilson Brothers Contracting.

Thank you to our **Minor Sponsors:** Garrun Underberg, TWK Swartberg, Saamstaan, FNB, Mount Fifty, Voermol, Molatek, EG Vets, Virbac, Afrivet, Agricol, Greenlands, Fairfield Dairies, Underberg Super Spar, Underberg Dairies, Rolyats Super Spar, Johnstones Kokstad, Sani Springs, Underberg Country Club, Castleburn, Build It Kokstad, Bearing and Bolt, Valley Lakes, Groundcover, Spargs, St Bernards Peak Hotel, Lake St Bernard, Kyron, Padel Club, Quantum Silver, Hopewell Cottage, Banchory Cottage, Lalamanzi Southbroom, Axxis FMS and Snow Valley.

Thank you to the Swartberg farmers who donated sheep towards the spit and auction: Jeff Fitch, Clark Rattray, Murray Cathcart, Lance Rorich, Andrew Gilson and Keith Gilson.

Congratulations to Graeme Steart from Giants Fly team for winning the raffle. It was a huge success! 14 Teams of 5 fishermen gave it their all on Friday and Saturday, and most were rewarded with some mighty catches!

The results were as follows:

1st Place: EG Commorants 551 cm total **2nd Place:** Xplorer 534 cm total **3rd Place:** Jamaican Rum 527 cm total **Biggest Fish:** Antony Mitchell from Team Brandis 69 cm (Hopewell Dam) **Best Dam:** Waterford Trophy (Andrew Gilson) **Riparian of the year:** Andrew Gilson **Bonehead:** Brian Brandis **Best Photo:** Roland Miller



Well done to Rhett Quin on another successful year as chairman.

Thank you to every single sponsor who contributed to this year's SSPA Fly Fishing Festival. See you next year!

FLA STOCK SALE NOVEMBER 2026

QTY SUPPLIED	416
QTY SOLD	396
PERCENTAGE	95%
MAXIMUM PRICE	R39 700
MINIMUM PRICE	R3 000
AVERAGE PRICE	R16 182

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This inviting home offers three en-suite bedrooms, a newly renovated kitchen and spacious living areas, complemented by a large garden and uninterrupted Drakensberg views. With underfloor heating, a fire pit, two-bedroom staff quarters, a double carport and a backup generator, it combines modern comfort with relaxed outdoor living.



This stylish family home offers four bedrooms, a designer kitchen and open-plan living with a built-in braai and cosy fireplace, complemented by a heated pool and lush garden. With solar power, double glazing, a garage, double carport and staff quarters, it combines modern luxury with comfortable, energy-efficient living.



This attractive home in Fairmount Estate offers two bedrooms, two bathrooms and open-plan living with a fitted kitchen, complemented by an undercover verandah and views of the mountains and Underberg Golf Course. With a double garage, beautifully landscaped estate gardens and direct access to the golf course and country club, it is ideal for retirement living or a convenient lock-up-and-go lifestyle.



This inviting home offers four bedrooms, two bathrooms and two lounges, including a sunken lounge, complemented by a well-appointed kitchen with built-in cupboards and a garden with a goldfish pond. With an additional en-suite bedroom attached to the garage, a separate laundry room, a double garage and ample parking, it combines comfortable living with the peace of mind of a fully fenced yard and automated gate.

CONTACT OUR AGENTS

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UNDERBERG - R 2 200 000
4 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS | 1 GARAGE

Enjoy the pretty mountain views from the covered wooden deck on this Vermont-style Nutec home. Low maintenance construction, clean lines and stylish finishes make this property very appealing.

Paula Bullimore
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UNDERBERG - R 3 795 000
4 BEDROOMS | 3 BATHROOMS | 2 GARAGES

Nestled in the stunning Southern Drakensberg on 4 hectares adjoining the uKhahlamba Wilderness Reserve, this picturesque thatched cottage serves as a tranquil and idyllic country getaway. Full solar.

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



UNDERBERG - R 5 250 000
3 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS | 2 GARAGES

Framed by extensive established gardens and sweeping mountain views, this property combines productive farmland and ample grazing with a comfortable home and cottage.

Paula Bullimore
+27 (0)79 491 0101
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UNDERBERG - R 1 400 000
5 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS | 2 GARAGES

Nearly completed build including essential electrics and plumbing - ready for connection. Situated in a quiet area with peaceful views.

Paula Bullimore
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HIMEVILLE - R 3 000 000
3 BEDROOMS | 2 BATHROOMS

This private gem is perfect for weekend getaways or year-round living, with unforgettable sunsets and breath-taking mountain views. Completing the picture is a shared dam, teeming with birdlife.

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UNDERBERG - R 1 100 000
VACANT LAND - SMALLHOLDING

Situated on the outskirts of Underberg village, this 6.17-hectare vacant smallholding enjoys an elevated position, offering lovely views overlooking the village and its surrounding countryside.

Khwezi Ngcobo & Jade Lloyd
+27 (0)73 381 3957 & +27 (0)72 194 2121
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