

news you're not supposed to know

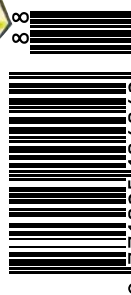
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FEBRUARY 2007

**ANC fatcats
milk kids'
feeding
scheme**



Rian Malan on the War of the Red Kitaab Bowls-club rage engulfs SA
Global warming: The prof who reckons The End's NOT nigh!



IF BURNING CHARCOAL TO MELLOW JACK DANIEL'S SOUNDS A BIT EXTREME, WELL, IT IS.

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Reddam: nose not the judge

In an immature democracy the rule of law is of particular importance, including the necessity for matters *sub judice* to be left to be tried by the courts and not by the media, the public or the mob, as is happening increasingly in our country. In the UK, unless things have much changed in the years since I left, you would have run the risk of being sent to jail without trial for your editorial on the fracas on Main Road, Claremont, in which Andrew Merryweather sustained serious injury.

As to the refusal of parents

or criticise the verdict. I suggest you do the same.

In the meantime I suggest you do some real investigative journalism and finger the people behind the sale of drugs and alcohol to teenagers on Main Road in Claremont.

Geraldine Goncalves

Newlands, Cape Town

Our democracy might be immature, but our legal system is not; it's simply decadent: you're likely to get at least as much justice from the media and the mob as you'll get from the courts – only you'll get it soon enough after the event to still know what

of drugs and liquor on Main Road, Claremont? Now that's something to think about!

You reckon we'd have been sent to jail without trial in the UK? How old are you, for heaven's sake?! – Ed.

Merryweather case

Why not print the telephone number of the concerned parent, Pierre? I'm sure there are *noseweek* readers who would love to phone him, to assist in relieving him of his burden of guilt. After the 200th call he might let us know his surname and be more willing to assist,

story exposing the blatant and disgusting fraud enacted by Transnet against its pensioners of the Second Defined Fund (*noses86 & 87*)! Please give us a "follow up" soon.

Dennis Cronje

Somerset West

Gobodo to hell

In your article "Kebble trouble – it just won't go away" (*nose86*), you refer to "a well-known national firm of accountants and auditors, Gobodo". We would like to set the record straight:

Gobodo Incorporated is a national firm of Chartered Accountants as well as Registered Auditors. We are a reputable firm providing professional services in strict compliance with the regulations governing the Auditing Profession. All of our directors and shareholders are respected members of good standing of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants. The firm and its directors are members of the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA) as well as the Association for the Advancement of Black Accountants of Southern Africa (ABASA).

As of 17 March 2003, Gobodo Forensic & Investigative Accounting, the company your story refers to, ceased to be a subsidiary of Gobodo Inc, and is in no way related to us. We are currently pursuing our legal options and rights regarding the use of the name Gobodo.

We trust that this letter provides clarity on the misconception that was created in your article.

Sathie Gounden

CEO, Gobodo Incorporated
Johannesburg

The misconception was not created by our article, it resulted from your firm's carelessness, first in engaging with such a shady partner, and then in disposing of a controversial subsidiary without first ensuring that it did not continue in business, let alone continue to use your name. You appear to have had reason to want to dissociate yourselves from Gobodo Forensic as long ago as March 2003 and sneaked away from the problem, happy to dump Gobodo Forensic on an unsuspecting public. By our reckoning you deserve all the bad publicity you get. – Ed.

Disrespect surprising

I commend your magazine for standing for the truth, as in your editorial in *nose85*. But I

In the UK you would have run the risk of being sent to jail without trial for your editorial on the fracas involving Andrew Merryweather

or staff of the school to talk to yourselves, why on earth should they? I have a teen-aged granddaughter at Reddam who, unsurprisingly, has a different version of the event and its background. I have advised her to wait for the court hearing where witnesses and accused will be examined and cross-examined and she can then accept

it's about; you won't be tortured by having to make dozens of court appearances spread over years – and then be presented with a legal bill that makes any sentence look ridiculous.

As for your last suggestion: might this be what it's really all about: rich teenagers behaving badly after being left free to "cruise" amongst the purveyors

seeing that he did not bring up his children to behave like this.

Mike De Klerk

By email

You see what the lady says about the media and the mob. Maybe hold off for a while. Also see next letter – Ed.

Father distraught

The Pierre who called Groote Schuur hospital three or four times is Pierre Thackwray – a religious man who was obviously freaked by what his son, one of the accused in the Merryweather case, might have done.

TK

Cape Town

Now we know who it is, we have every reason to hope he and his son will do the right thing. – Ed.

Why the silence?

Most of the unfortunate Somali refugees suffering persecution in Cape Town (*nose86*) appear to be Muslim. Why doesn't the Muslim Judicial Council step in and resolve some of the issues? And where is the Chamber of Business in all this? Attacks on Somali businesses are rampant and "the local traders also declared their intention to persuade the Somalis to raise their prices." Isn't free enterprise a "sacred" tenet of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry?

Pam Herr

Fish Hoek

Transnet well exposed

Thank you for the excellent

Gus

POND SCUM MORES



But if we don't stop dividing and polluting, surely we'll all die

SIMON'S TOWN HELL RUN

Suddenly atheists and secular humanists are everywhere amongst us. On yesterday's train to Simon's Town our carriage was stunned

into evasive silence by an evangelist hammering us with terrifying quotations from Richard Dawkins (evidently there is no afterlife, heaven or even hell?).

Reaching our destination was such a relief that the entire congregation burst into ecstatic ululation, hallelujah and amen!

Gus Ferguson

object to your reference to the people depicted in the cartoon as "African savages". As an African (whatever that means) I take offence when any person of African descent (dead or alive) is referred to as a savage. I believe that it is the same disrespect to Africans that populists cling to when dismissing cogent arguments about their failings in their incumbent positions as either State officials or pretenders. I think an apology would be appropriate.

ZN
Durban

We thought we had adequately enough placed our use of the phrase in its historical context to allow us to use it to lend ironic bite to our criticism, but if you are still offended, we do, of course, apologise. - Ed.

Swanepoel Scumbag

Your article on Chris Swanepoel (nose86) was on the mark.

I've known Chris since childhood – he was a close friend of my father's. Two years ago he telephoned me and spent an hour telling me about the misfortunes he had been through. I felt very sorry for him. He told me he was bringing a new product to SA from South America – Elicina, a natural cosmetic cream – and wanted me to assist him in having packaging and product inserts printed. (I am part owner of a printing company). We have a strict policy not to open accounts without a credit check, but, because of my long relationship with Chris, and despite my partner's disapproval, I pushed through the job.

When it came time for Swanepoel to pay, the excuses started. He even told me that he'd only pay me after I printed more work for him. When we threatened him with legal action, he laughed at me, saying he would tell the courts that everything in his home belonged

to his wife. This subsequently happened.

After a heated argument on the telephone, he invited me to meet him "like a man" and sort it out on the street. The gutless coward never pitched.

I can write off the bad debt as experience, but I feel sick for this poor family friend conned into entrusting him with his entire life's savings. There are too many such scumbags around, and I salute you for exposing them.

Andre Bam
Johannesburg

SABC takes on the dead

About six years ago I bought a property from the estate of the late Mrs MM Noteboom.

For three years thereafter I dutifully returned SABC licence payment requests with a note mentioning that Mrs Noteboom was deceased and therefore not too interested in paying her TV licence. I have just received a red envelope with a logo of an hourglass on the back and the warning 'YOUR TIME IS UP'.

This year's request for Mrs Noteboom to pay her licence, balance now standing at R2651.90, is accompanied by the threat of legal action should payment not be made.

I was wondering how much it is going to cost the SABC to institute proceedings against a deceased person? I'll keep you up to speed on what happens next.

Maria Hofmeyr
Cape Town

The SABC and their extremely wealthy debt-collecting lawyers are amongst the institutions who believe computers are a substitute for people with intelligence, so they no longer employ any of the latter. We await your next report with morbid fascination. - Ed.

Banks law unto themselves

Maybe I woke up late in life but it seems to me banks are

above the law, simply because they are financially powerful. All that remains to defend us, I have been told by a sympathetic cabinet minister, is *noseweek*.

As a mechanical engineer I created wealth for our country by, amongst other things, designing and bringing to production the very visible Giant Inflatable Slide now being manufactured in China, and the South African version of the Poolcover. I have transformed various inventions into wealth creating machines.

I was doing my job well – until an unqualified Nedbank employee interfered. A former state prosecutor, he got a job as a risk manager at Nedbank. With no business experience, he promptly "judged" and "sentenced" me, peremptorily withdrawing my long-established overdraft facility, effectively removing me from the economy in a humiliating manner. Directorship is not allowed when you are ITC-listed.

Realising their blunder, the bank's executives set out to silence me at any cost. The story reads like a script for a horror movie: you would not imagine how they have extended themselves to prevent the truth from surfacing.

A solution might be to emigrate – the world is short of engineers – but my nature is to persevere. Can you help the citizens of our country against horrors like this? Presently I am employed by the largest gold producer of our country and the CEO personally utilises my expertise to improve efficiencies.

Kobus Prinsloo
Welkom

We are investigating this and other, similar stories and will report in due course. - Ed.

Welcome to robberland

After *Carte Blanche's* expose of baggage theft at OR Tambo Airport, lo and behold, my case gets opened on a flight from Cape Town and things get stolen. When I report this to the baggage handling section, I am told they accept zero liability as baggage is transported at my risk. My question: when DO they address a very obvious theft problem in their baggage control area? It must make a profound impression on foreign travellers when their first introduction to good ole SA is having their luggage stolen on arrival.

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Lawyers: An obstacle to justice

LET'S FACE IT: our legal system has effectively collapsed. It is incapable of delivering a reasonable measure of justice within a reasonable time to ordinary citizens in the ordinary course of business. There are many reasons for this, most not unique to our country. But one of the more obvious is undoubtedly the culture of greed, pride and self-indulgent arrogance that pervades the legal profession, from attorneys and prosecutors to senior advocates and judges. They will happily compete to serve the half percent of the population that can still afford them, rather than "stoop" to finding speedy, pragmatic solutions to ordinary people's everyday disputes.

For an "ordinary" motor collision case to drag out over three years and 21 postponements in court is business as usual – for the lawyers. The fact that this must only deliver more injustice rather than resolution to all the parties (but most of all to the aggrieved) appears to be of no concern to them. Three of the stories in this issue (see pages 24–27) poignantly demonstrate the point: lawyers are increasingly an obstacle to justice. Everyone wants justice; so, if the lawyers can't deliver, more and more people are going to be looking for justice by other means.

ON PAGE 12 we have Rian Malan having his last say about Aids statistics. Why? Well you may ask. Let's just say his piece contains news you're not supposed to know, it's fascinating and it's written in Malan's usual provocative, engaging style. And it is his last on the subject. Or so he says.

I must, however, remind you that Aids statistics have a life all their own and serve an agenda that has very little to do with the disease itself.

A small demonstration... Late last year there was a spate of stories in the media hailing Free State pathologist Leon Wagner as a hero – the doctor who would not lie; who bravely put the dreaded word Aids on a death certificate – only to find himself facing a complaint of malpractice. Opposition parties and Aids activists rallied to his defence. *Huisgenoot* depicted him as a lone warrior against the evil forces of denial. Wagner had told the bitter truth. If all doctors followed his example, we were told, government records would at last reveal the appalling extent of Aids deaths.

It fell to the Aids Law Project to point out

that this response was absurd. The ALP pointed out that when a patient dies, a doctor is required to complete a two-page death certificate. The cause of death recorded on the first page should only be "natural causes" or "unnatural causes". (Instead, Wagner wrote "AIDS" here, even though he had reportedly never treated the deceased, tested her for HIV or even bothered to look at the corpse.) This page is given to the family for use in arranging burial and applying for an official death certificate.

On the second page of the death notice, regulations require the doctor to state the immediate and underlying causes of death (such as HIV) and other relevant information. "This is confidential and is sent to the Department of Home Affairs in a sealed envelope," explained the ALP. "It is not given to the family or any other person."

The point of the confidential page, which has been in use since 1998, is to enable Home Affairs to collect statistics on causes of death – including HIV and Aids – "without violating the deceased's right to confidentiality".

Indeed, organized medicine practically begged doctors to speculate in the confidential section, providing space for no fewer than five underlying causes of death. The message was – if you think it's Aids, please write Aids. We won't tell anyone.

Oddly, hardly anyone obliged. Computer models estimate that around 20,000 Aids deaths took place in 1998. 25 percent of that number were actually recorded as such on death certificates. The remarkable thing is that, every year since then the percentage has declined: while the number of hypothetical Aids deaths had, by 2003, soared to 239,000, only five percent of that number were recorded on death certificates in that year.

Why would doctors tell more and more lies with each passing year? We can speculate that, prior to 1998, they did not want to inflict needless embarrassment on the bereaved. But why lie after the confidential page came into being? Are our doctors stricken with denial? Or are computer-generated Aids death tolls seriously inflated?

As for Dr. Wagner, on the basis of news reports, he appears to be just another bigot. The woman was black, she was young, she was dead – must have been Aids, eh?

The Editor

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Let them eat kak!

A bunch of well-connected ANC fatcats are using an Eastern Cape school feeding scheme as a cash cow – at the expense of starving kids



IN THE VAST informal settlements of the Eastern Cape, thousands of desperately poor children, promised daily meals by none other than their true hero Nelson Mandela, have literally had the bread taken out of their mouths by businessmen well-connected to the ANC leadership, and conniving education department officials. Beneath a tangled web of lies and evasions, dummy co-ops and high-sounding officialese, lie empty plates and broken promises.

Though the larger picture, and full extent of corruption in the entire Primary Schools Nutrition Programme (PSNP) remain to be painted, *noseweek's* own investigations have followed one of the money trails – from Bisho via “the skwata kamps” to plush offices in Sandton.

Characters at the centre of the feeding scheme scandal involving the missappropriation of at least R100m, include Invume director Sandi Majali and his attorney Barry Aaron. Majali is the man who visited Iraq with ANC secretary-general Kgalema Motlanthe to discuss oil business, in the days when Saddam Hussein was running Iraq. Majali subsequently used money advanced to Invume by PetroSA to make an R11m donation to the ANC. Aaron was Majali's attorney when he sought an interdict against the *Mail & Guardian* in an attempt to keep that story secret.

Invume, Majali, Aaron and two companies central to the Eastern Cape feeding scheme scandal all share the same Sandton address – giving rise to speculation that the feeding scheme money may have gone the same way as PetroSA's advance to Invume in 2004.

When the Department of Education took control of the PSNP in 2004 (see



Picture: Daily Dispatch



Hands up: Former Eastern Cape MEC for Education Mkhangelisi Matomela (above) and businessman Sandi Majali (left)

box on page 9), small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) were contracted to prepare a daily meal for kids all over the country, who were not getting adequate meals at home. The food, often just bread and instant soup, was sourced

from local suppliers who delivered on consignment and got paid by the education department. In effect, local mothers were feeding their communities' children with simple food prepared from ingredients brought to them by local suppliers.

In the Eastern Cape, home to masses of the country's poorest of the poor, several hundred thousand kids were being fed each day, until the entire programme in the province was suspended at the beginning of this year, pending the outcome of a forensic investigation into corruption. The report – not yet made public, for obvious political reasons – was handed to provincial Premier Nosimo Balindlela in early January. Claims that at least R100m

had “gone missing” await elaboration.

Huge sums intended for the feeding scheme flowed through the Eastern Cape Department of Education: even if only one rand per meal was being paid out (exact figures are not forthcoming from education authorities, but a figure of R1.17 has been given verbally by various sources) the figure is massive.

The gap for milking the particular cash-cow we’re looking at here may originally have been created by the machinations (read corruption) of bureaucrats: in various places the Department of Education began missing payments to the SMMEs. Contracted suppliers, such as local bakery Mister Bread, in turn were not paid, and began suspending supplies while they fought for payment.

With the whole system in growing disarray, the then Eastern Cape MEC for Education, Mkhangelisi Matomela, saw his chance. Around September 2005, talking of “trickle-down” economic empowerment where the national wealth would be shared by communi-

already in place more effective – but in fact the existing mess was due to the incompetence of his own department.

In Matomela’s scheme “primary cooperatives” would be responsible for preparing foodstuffs delivered by suppliers. “Secondary cooperatives”, formed by political cronies, would handle relations with suppliers, primary co-ops and the education department. Whereas, in the original scheme, women feeding the children were paid directly by the education department, and, in turn, paid their suppliers, a political middle-man system was thus created – clearly to “trickle-up” the cash flow to those well connected in party structures.

The bearer of good tidings to the chosen communities in and around East London, King William’s Town and Bisho, was one Ndoda Sikhumbuzo Nelson Ntlikithi, a man with not one, but two failed government housing projects under his belt. He is reported to have warned candidate primary cooperatives that he had the ear of influential people like ANC secre-

Food for thought

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL Nutrition Programme (PSNP) was introduced in 1994 as one of then-President Nelson Mandela’s lead projects for the country. According to the RDP White Paper of 1994, the aim was to improve attendance and punctuality among primary school pupils, to contribute to their general health and to enhance learning capacity by alleviating short-term hunger – in short, by offering them a balanced meal each day, to get children to come to school and to support proper attention during lessons.

The PSNP was part of the Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP), managed at national level by the departments of health and education. At provincial level it was managed more by health than education departments. At the grass-roots it was operated by school project committees, school governing bodies, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations.

With so many learners coming from seriously impoverished homes where hunger rules, and kids are mostly in the care of their grandmothers, the scheme, for a while, tremendously improved school attendances. Yet meals provided were very basic, often only bread and instant soup, or a plate of samp.

Administration of the scheme by two separate government departments proved a nightmare, mainly due to volumes of paperwork that often led to delayed or even non-payments – unable to pay their suppliers, many women handling the food found themselves unable to make the meals. In January 2002 the Cabinet transferred the PSNP from the Department of Health to the Department of Education with effect from April 2004.

housing project debacle, was already known in the province, especially in and around East London, site of part of the pilot project, some cooperatives objected to his involvement in what they felt was a vital project. The MEC gave them a choice: work with Ndoda or be left out. They joined in, and paid to have their primary cooperatives registered with the department. Although these co-ops, Siyenqoba Primary Cooperative Ltd, Somelele Primary Cooperative Ltd and so on, were presented with registration certificates, they were not formally registered with the Department of Trade and Industry.

According to a circular from Matome-

“This is a political programme created by politicians, that is the truth we cannot run away from”

Eastern Cape MEC for Education, Mkhangelisi Matomela

ties at the grassroots, Matomela introduced to the Department of Education the idea of setting up a “pilot project” in six districts of the province. The ostensible rationale was to make the system

tary-general Kgalema Motlanthe, and that no cooperative would be involved without his approval. It is alleged that Ndoda and Majali belong to the same *Amampondomise* clan of Transkei, and that Ndoda is a blood relative of Matomela.

When local women protested that the original scheme was already fine thank you very much, except for the department’s regular failures to pay up, the education department at first balked at going along with Matomela’s directives. But at a department meeting early in 2006 Matomela reminded those present: “This is a political programme that is created by politicians, that is the truth we cannot run away from. The method to be used comes from the party hierarchy.”

Now from how high up exactly would that be? Or was this simply another example of “party discipline” being used as the cover for “business initiatives” hatched elsewhere – in Sandton?

Since Ndoda’s record, thanks to his



Track record: Ndoda Sikhumbuzo Nelson Ntlikithi, veteran of two failed housing schemes

la's office, only secondary cooperatives were to have direct contact with the Department. Chief among these was the Inqabayesizwe Secondary Cooperative Ltd. – also not on the Department of Trade and Industry's company-registration database. Inqabayesizwe seems to have operated as the link between the primary co-ops, the department, and the new suppliers – Msinga Business Networks (Pty) Ltd and Impilo Food Distributors (Pty) Ltd, based in faraway Sandton.

Ndoda himself appears to have been the driving force in Inqabayesizwe – making him probably the key figure in the chain between the department handing out the money, the suppliers and the women in the co-ops left wondering what happened to the money intended for feeding the children.

Matomela's arrangements infuriated some of the primary cooperatives, who petitioned the MEC to reconsider. Instead he sent in his alleged right-hand man, a Mr Bula. In a meeting chaired by Mthobeli Gaca, director of

the SNP in the province, Bula pulled no punches to pacify the agitated co-operative members. Speaking in Xhosa, he said: *"Wkufumana kwethu inkululeko, urhulumente waye wenza iunit ezithile zokujonga lenkululeko ingabiwa ngabamhlophe, ngokuthi imali yethu kulo Mzantsi Africa isebenze kwalapha kuthi singabeleki amaBhulu emqolo."* ("When we got freedom, the government established certain units to safeguard this freedom against being stolen by whites, by ensuring that our South African wealth must circulate amongst us blacks, and not carry whites on our backs.")

The race factor worked magic and Ndoda's Inqabayesizwe was left in full control of the pilot scheme. The only other visible secondary cooperative was Mzoxolo, operating in East London and King William's Town. Integrated Centralized Development Secondary Cooperative was to be included later, after members allegedly sought assistance from President Mbeki's mother, and threatened the Eastern Cape premier that they would go public

Sandi Majali is a director of both companies. Attorney Barry Aaron, once a director of Impilo, also shares an address with the two companies, as does Invume.

An employee in one of Majali's companies tells *noseweek*: "If an electrical engineer working for Mr Majali tells you he can supply bread, you ask him when he can deliver, not how."

According to Ndoda's own figures, the department pays R1.17 per child, of which 73cents goes to the suppliers (Msinga and Impilo), 14cents to distribution and logistics (also Msinga and Impilo), 24cents to primary co-operatives and 0.06cents to the "secondary cooperatives".

With 22,324 kids being fed in the pilot project, Impilo and Msinga would have been taking in over R19,000 a day – not bad for doing paperwork from your offices in Sandton. According to *noseweek's* source, Majali and company are also involved in supplies and finances for other organisations involved in the rest of the Primary Nutrition Scheme in the Eastern Cape.

When there is no food for the children the teachers blame us, yet we are not responsible when nothing is delivered to us

Bulelwa Sede of Somelele Primary Cooperative



Picture: Daily Dispatch

On the one hand: Eastern Cape Premier Nosimo Balindlela vacillated

with what they knew about relations between Matomela and Ndoda.

With none of the cooperatives formally registered, payments had to be made in cash. Soon enough primary co-ops were not being paid at all. The foodstuffs being delivered began to deteriorate in quality – trucks of unwrapped stale bread coming in from Bloemfontein or Durban, poor-grade samp that no-one else wanted, and so on.

Bulelwa Sede of Somelele Primary Cooperative tells *noseweek*: "We did all the work and ended up with no empowerment. They made our lives miserable. When there is no food for the children the teachers blame us. We must explain, yet nothing is delivered to us."

The two official suppliers responsible for this state of affairs, Msinga Business Networks and Impilo Food Distributors, share Suite 402, West Tower, Nelson Mandela Square in Sandton – they also share auditors and some directors. Msinga is registered as specialising in "computer and related activities", and Impilo as a specialist in "other business activities".

noseweek followed the trail: whereas the contracts were officially between the education department and the secondary cooperatives, payments were being channelled via as-yet unidentified entities, then moving to none other than Barry Aaron & Associates in Sandton. *noseweek* has obtained a confidential payment instruction from Barry Aaron to Kurt/Andrew/Meshack of Standard Bank, directing payments to Msinga Business Networks and Inqabayesizwe Secondary Co-op, dated July 18, 2006. The instruction is copied to Mr S Majali, Mr K Hariparsahd and to Mr D Daniel of Inqabayesizwe.

We have also obtained a statement of account showing that the Inqabayesizwe cooperative received payments from Barry Aaron & Associates, Msinga Business Networks, Inyengane Support Centre and itself – Inqabayesizwe (two of them loans to be repaid by the "primary cooperatives"). A source close to the Eastern Cape education department explains that this "was the only way of ensuring that the primary cooperatives didn't know the exact amount

received from the government.”

As to why the women of the primary co-ops were not receiving their due, a source close to Inqabayesizwe says there was nothing left for them after being billed for the attorneys’ “handling fees” and repayment of loans. Inqabayesizwe, it seems, had itself engaged the attorneys and taken loans in the names of the primary co-ops.

noseweek has learnt that despite being aware of serious problems with the overall feeding scheme Premier Nosimo Balindlela couldn’t act due to “political complexities”. For close to a year, she was torn on whether to take action and risk offending Matomela’s patrons and the party’s hierarchy, or sit back and hope nobody would go public. She opted for the latter. But provincial watchdog, the *Daily Dispatch*, wouldn’t let the matter rest, and, after several exposés and numerous editorials, Balindlela finally appointed forensic auditors.

Premier Balindlela was of course well aware what the problem was and who was responsible – she didn’t need a forensic audit to tell her. Is that why the investigators declined to take sworn statements from cooperative members who were ready to tell all?

“Those investigators came to talk to us,” Nonyameko Mzotane of Siyenqoba Primary Cooperative tells *noseweek*, “they stopped midway, promising to return to record our statements, and to date we are still waiting.”

“They didn’t want to get evidence from us,” adds Bulelwa Sede of Somelele Primary Cooperative, “they knew who was responsible and the process was simply meant to buy time for the thieves to hide the money.”

Matomela resigned from office on January 11. The *Daily Dispatch* quoted him as saying, “I’ve been thinking ‘what do I do? Do I subject the premier to criticism for a programme which is my own baby?’ I decided to take full responsibility and resign.”

However, a confidential source close to the premier’s office had a different version: “He didn’t mean to resign, he had been assured by his top political friends that he wouldn’t be fired. He meant to dare Nosimo by telling her: ‘I think I should resign if you don’t like me.’ And the cool lady advised him that she couldn’t offer any response to a verbal statement.”

Still thinking that the premier wouldn’t sack him without clearance from his friends at the top of the party, Motamela then penned his resignation, which Balindlela gladly accepted – and immediately announced his replacement: Johnny Makgato, chairperson of the Finance Portfolio Committee.

Will Makgato investigate the involvement of Msinga, Impilo and Barry Aaron & Associates in the scheme? Any bets on this little cash cow quietly wandering off down a side corridor, to find grazing in other, quieter fields? **W**



“I swear I wasn’t looking at snut—I was just stealing snut.”

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Rian Malan's last ever Aids piece

(Or so he says...)

I WAS INTRIGUED to learn that *noseweek* and I were mentioned at an HIV/Aids conference in Toronto late last year. Treatment Action Campaign honcho Nathan Geffen informed the gathering that “a journalist by the name of Rian Malan wrote a column in *noseweek* arguing that the Aids statistics were completely wrong, that there wasn't a serious Aids epidemic in Africa, and that people weren't dying of Aids in great numbers. He didn't dispute that HIV caused Aids. He just thought that this was massively exaggerated. I ended up writing a detailed response, and today I'm glad to say that Malan's exited the debate. He's considered to be quite a fool by the South African media, quite correctly.”

Considered a fool, eh? These are fighting words. In truth, I exited the debate because I came under attack by armies of frenzied activists, all bent on portraying me as a grubby, drunken madman whose views on Aids (as expressed in *nose52*) could not be taken seriously. In truth, I never claimed Aids was not a problem. On the contrary – I described it as a terrible affliction that was claiming countless lives. At the same time, however, it was clear that Aids numbers were being exaggerated and good news suppressed. I stand by that story. Indeed, more good news has emerged in the three years since its publication.

As reported in *nose52*, newspaper stories stating that millions of Africans die of Aids each year should not be taken literally. These estimates may look authoritative, but they are actually generated by machines entirely vulnerable to the “trash in/trash out” principle – if you put bad data into a computer model you get rubbish out. In the 1990s, India repeatedly rejected UNAids' computer-generated estimates for this very reason. Several African countries were also sceptical. In 2001 I published an article on the subject

in an American magazine. My critical views were dismissed as symptoms of derangement and denial. The same would not hold today.

At the time of my last foray into this arena, almost all African Aids statistics were produced by UNAids, which organizes annual HIV surveys in pregnancy clinics across the continent. The results are put into computer models programmed to assume that if a certain percentage of pregnant females come up HIV-positive, it follows that a similar percentage of the general population is probably infected, and that a portion of those hypothetical unfortunates die each year. This form of “sentinel surveillance” suggested an Aids epidemic of dumbfounding proportions in Africa.

In 2004, researchers tried a different sort of survey in Kenya, selecting a representative sample of the population for HIV-testing. The UNAids system had suggested that 15% of Kenya's adults were HIV-infected. The new method, universally held to be more credible, suggested that Kenya's real HIV rate was closer to 6.7%. More than half of Kenya's hypothetical HIV cases disappeared overnight.

Since then, around ten Kenya-style population studies have been carried out elsewhere in Africa, invariably with similar results. In Sierra Leone, estimated HIV prevalence tumbled by 87%. In Ethiopia, by 78%. In Burkina Faso, by 72%. In Burundi, 35%. In Zambia, 27%. In South Africa a 2005 population study pointed to radical overestimation of the HIV rate among racial minorities. Aids researchers had previously claimed that HIV prevalence among whites, for instance, was as high as six percent. The 2005 population study suggested that the real HIV rate was closer to 0.6%. In the coloured community estimated HIV prevalence plummeted from six to 1.9%. In the Western Cape, five out of

six previously estimated HIV infections vanished.

This good news was, as usual, ignored by the local media, but some big US newspapers were about to join *noseweek* in asking awkward questions. The *Boston Globe* tracked down Jim Chin, creator of the computer model used (until 2001) by UNAids to generate HIV estimates for Africa and Asia. “Chin said he thinks the global rate is inflated by 25% to 40%,” reported the *Globe*. “Two US health officials working on Aids said they think the global numbers may be 50% inflated.”

Then the *Washington Post* decided to take a closer look at Rwanda, portrayed in the 1980s as “the epicentre of Africa's Aids pandemic”, with an adult HIV infection rate as high as 30%. Today, it is acknowledged that the primitive blood tests on which such startling claims rested were defective. When more reliable tests were deployed in the late 1990s, Rwanda's estimated HIV infection rate came out at 11.2%. And when a population study was carried out in 2005, the rate plummeted to 3%. “Aids deaths on the predicted scale never arrived here,” said the *Post*, quoting local health officials. “The United Nations has for years overestimated the extent of HIV/Aids in East and West Africa.” “They keep cranking out numbers that you can't defend,” adds Chin.

On the other hand, the *Post* harboured no doubts about southern Africa's Aids cataclysm. Such certainty rests on mortality data from South Africa, the only African country where it is possible to assess the accuracy of Aids estimates against actual death registrations. Elsewhere in Africa, something like one percent of deaths are registered by governments; in South Africa, the equivalent figure is close to 90%. This assessment is accepted by all researchers, who differ only on one issue: when did registra-

tion reach its present high levels?

This has been the subject of bitter backroom arguments since the days of the Rapid Mortality Surveillance project, a multi-agency task force set up in the late 1990s to get a better handle on Aids' impact. The project's studies showed an ominous rise in registered deaths, with more and more people dying at sexually active ages. Aids researchers blamed Aids, but Dr Sulaiman Bah of Stats SA wasn't so sure.

Bah noted that during apartheid, Pretoria didn't want the world to know too much about conditions in the Bantustans, where diseases of poverty were rife and infant mortality rates astronomical. Consequently, death registration in such areas was universally acknowledged to have been abysmal ("grossly incomplete") when the ANC came to power. According to Bah's calculations, only 37% of deaths in rural areas were registered in 1996 — as compared to 86% in urbanized areas fully plugged into apartheid's registration machinery.

This was unacceptable to the ANC, and 1998 saw the start of major campaigns to improve death registra-

Pretoria didn't want the world to know too much about conditions in the Bantustans

tion, particularly in apartheid's former dumping grounds. A simplified death certificate was introduced. Home Affairs opened satellite offices in former homelands. Regulations were amended to allow deaths to be registered with tribal authorities. Undertakers were offered subsidies on condition that deaths were properly registered. And

so on. Soon afterwards, as we have seen, registered deaths started rising rapidly. Aids researchers assumed Aids was to blame. Bah believed the rise was to some extent an illusion caused by improving death registration. (See *nose30*)

The Aids bwanas didn't want to hear this, not in the winter of 2000. At the time, President Thabo Mbeki's heretical views on Aids were causing global consternation. Some even accused him of genocide. As far as they were concerned, the data gathered by Rapid Mortality Surveillance provided more than enough evidence to substantiate such charges. They wanted to release it immediately, but Bah refused to go along until the critical registration issue had been addressed. In the end, the Aids faction released the data unilaterally, and it wound up on the front page of the *Sunday Times*, under a banner headline screaming, "Young, Gifted and DEAD."

"These shocking graphs," said the *Times*, "show how the number of South Africans who die before they reach the age of 50 almost doubled over the past 10 years — an increase attributed directly to HIV/Aids."



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Sulaiman Bah had no stomach for this sort of fight and quit his job soon after. His cause was taken up by Dr Rodney M Richards, a Colorado-based microbiologist who continued to argue that Aids researchers were distorting the statistics. Richards' case rested in part on the fact that the most rapid rise in reported deaths in the years 1997-2004 took place not in provinces with the highest HIV prevalence, but in precisely those provinces where death registration had been "grossly incomplete" before the launch of registration campaigns. Consider rural Limpopo, where, in 1997, HIV prevalence amongst pregnant women was found to be 8%. By 2004, Limpopo deaths among sexually active adults had increased by 212%. But in urbanized Gauteng, although HIV prevalence was twice as high (17%), deaths rose by less than half this amount (99%). Clearly something was wrong with the figures.

Richards didn't contest that a portion of the rise in deaths was attributable to Aids, but pointed out that deaths caused by conditions entirely unrelated to HIV were rising too. Deaths attributed to stroke, hypertension, breast cancer, and renal failure increased by 47%, 56%, 57% and 69% respectively. Deaths from aplastic anaemia were up 141%. Road accident deaths rose 198%. Assault deaths soared 213%.

To Richards, increases of this magnitude for non-HIV conditions could only be explained by improved registration. The Aids lobby said otherwise. It fell to Statistics South Africa to referee this potentially explosive dispute.

After sitting on the fence for years, the agency published a report in May 2006 that came down solidly on Richards' side. Completeness of death registration, declared Stats SA, rose from around 68% in 1998 to just under 90% in 2003. The agency declined to spell out the consequences, but Richards was willing. "A shift of this magnitude radically alters interpretation of the raw mortality data," he said, "because it's not just death registration that's improving. With each passing year, the population grows, and deaths should increase accordingly."

Once you factor all this in, says Richards, the 56% rise seen in raw mortality data for the years 1998 to 2004 shrinks to 14%. In the sexually active age bracket (15-64), an apparent rise of 83% shrinks to 30%. Richards acknowledges that a 30% rise in adult mortality is cause for grave concern, but emphasizes that this is less than a fifth of what local actuaries were predicting just five years ago. "If your

On the far side of the planet UNAids was struggling with a credibility crisis. Important newspapers were raising doubts about its estimates

government and corporations based resource allocations on those predictions," said Richards, "millions have been wasted."

Meanwhile, on the far side of the planet, UNAids was struggling with a credibility crisis. Important newspapers were raising doubts about its estimates. Computer modeler Jim Chin was on record saying: "They keep cranking out numbers you can't defend." Remedial action was called for. Next thing, an American researcher named Barbara Anderson showed up in Pretoria to participate in what statistics chief Pali Lehohla described as "a cooperative effort between Stats SA and UNAids".

Anderson and Stats SA's mortality guru, Dr Heston Philips, reworked the 1997-2004 death registration data, and, in September 2006, published a paper maintaining that completeness of registration among the sexually active actually declined in response to the massive government reforms of 1998, from 89% to 82% for females, and far more dramatically from 94% to only 80% for males.

Never mind that this was entirely improbable. It's the result they were after. The result of this unexplained flip-flop by Stats SA was an instant tripling in perceived mortality rates from 1998 to 2004 – from 14% to 45% for persons of all ages, and from 30% to 83% for the sexually active. "These are huge differences," says Richards. "This is not science. It is a pathetic exercise that serves no other purpose than to covertly transform SA registered deaths into totals that agree with UNAids' latest computer model."

[In fact, much the same sort of statistical manipulation that Tran-

snet's actuaries indulged in to assist Transnet in defrauding its pensioners. – Ed.]

Needless to say, the world doesn't care what Richards says. UNAids makes the running in this debate. Within days, Anderson and Phillips' findings were being quoted as fact in the New York Times and in the speeches of UNAids executives, who could now claim their model's accuracy had been verified by real-life evidence in the only African country where such an exercise is possible.

I twice wrote to Heston Phillips, Stats SA's mortality guru, asking him to explain the contradictions between his agency's May and September papers, and to comment on Richards' critique. Dr Phillips has not responded, suggesting he is not stupid, just wily. Any thinking person must find this alarming. The registration of deaths debate may be boring, but its importance cannot be exaggerated. Let's say you live on a desert island where 100 deaths take place each year, but completeness of registration is only 50%. Statistics will show 50 deaths a year. If government gets its act together and starts recording all deaths, however, registered deaths will double, and naïve observers will say something terrible is happening here.

For twenty years, UNAids' computer modelers have been telling us that something terrible is happening in Africa – that requires countless billions of dollars in donations to put right. South Africa is the only country where such claims can be checked, provided we are willing to face the truth. The Aids bwanas seem disinclined. The prominent researchers who shouted Sulaiman Bah down in 2000 have been promising for years to publish a scientific explanation of their reasoning. Nothing has materialized. As far as I am aware, the SA government's post-1998 registration reforms have never, not once, been mentioned in the massive literature generated by Aids researchers. We are simply told rising mortality is caused almost entirely by Aids, and that raising doubts is denialist.

Last May, Stats SA took a position that implicitly trashed this view, only to reverse itself six months later. We would have no case if the first publication was a mistake, but Stats SA has made no such claim. It simply got into bed with UNAids and lent its reputation to an exercise designed, according to Richards, to lend spurious legitimacy to the UN's computer model.

What's wrong with a bit of fibbing, if that's what it takes to raise money for a good cause? Well, apart from conning donors who might have spent their money better elsewhere, on the scale we're talking about, it seriously distorts social priorities and government planning. Told that they face appalling problems, governments have diverted pitifully scarce resources from other needs to combating an Aids threat that in several instances has turned out to have been grossly exaggerated. An example: faced with UNAids' warning in the nineties that their teachers were about to be decimated by Aids, several African governments responded by training armies of replacements. The result, according to UK researcher Paul Ben-nell, is millions wasted and a glut of unemployed teacher trainees in countries like Botswana and Swaziland.

The registration of deaths debate may be boring, but its importance cannot be exaggerated.

Meanwhile, the poor continue to die of ordinary diseases that could be cured for a few cents if medicines were available.

But what's bad for ordinary people is fine for the Aids industry. Computer modelers' estimates of impending disaster provide the basis for the Aids industry's funding demands. In Africa,

only a fraction of Aids-related aid goes to medicines and health care. Much of the rest is spent on absurdly expensive conferences, endlessly duplicative social research and "soft" interventions like awareness campaigns.

Two years ago, Stats SA staff were privately telling me they found this troubling. Clearly, something has changed. An explanation is awaited.

Meanwhile, I hew to the position set out way back in *nose30* (and, in greater detail, in *nose52*): Aids is the most political disease in human history, and almost all, if not all, Aids statistics are contaminated by the self-interested manipulations of Aids careerists of Nathan Geffen's ilk. I prefer to trust my bones, which maintain that Aids is a grave problem. But, until we do an honest job of our statistics gathering and analysis, exactly how grave is anyone's guess. **W**

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LET US BEGIN with something concrete. The sacred Kitaab exists. Its cover is red. The lavishly illuminated pages bear gold leaf, an antique-looking watermark, and are covered with mystic symbols and a mysterious hand-written text. Clearly, the maker was a person of substance. As I reached out to touch it, I was warned to be careful, because the Kitaab is said to be imbued with supernatural powers. At times, it can be warm to the touch. Sometimes it even glows.

According to legend, the man who wrote this Kitaab, or religious diary, was a slave and Sufi mystic who lived in Simon's Town nearly 250 years ago and now lies buried on the mountain-side above the town. The exact site of his grave is a matter of dispute. Some say it is high on the mountain, above pricey Simon's Kloof. Others claim it lies under a bluegum tree on what is now Dolphin Way. Nearby residents report a constant stream of robed Islamic pilgrims to the latter site. They bring flowers, burn candles, drape the grave with brocades. Sometimes they stay all night, praying and chanting. They tell puzzled residents they have come to commune with the spirit of their ancestor Ismail. They also say things like: "You are very lucky to live here, because no harm will ever befall you."

Suburbanites love this. The comings and goings around Ismail's grave make them feel they're in touch with a mystery that carries them back to slavery,

Cape Town's learned
Islamic judges are
pondering a dramatic
case involving a
mysterious tome,
reports **Rian Malan**.
The characters in the
drama include Ibrahim
Rasool, Cherry Dilley
and Pallo Jordan

and breathes life into clichés about the Cape's rich cultural history.

Less polite, but no less thrilling, is the bitter battle that has broken out around Ismail and the diary he may have written. Ownership of the diary is in dispute, its contents likewise. There is heated talk of fraud and profiteering. Culture Minister Pallo Jordan has been drawn into the fray, along with Western Cape Premier Ibrahim Rasool. Charges have even been laid with the police, and the case is now before the Muslim Judicial Council. What follows is a curtain-raiser for what promises to be one of the strangest cases ever heard by Cape Town's learned Islamic judges.

Mr Ebrahiem Manuel is a spry 60-something ex-seaman who grew up in Simon's Town's Muslim enclave. His family is pious, but Ebrahiem was by his own account a bit of a joller in his youth. He called himself Brian, sported tattoos and travelled the world as a cook aboard cargo vessels. His transformation began in 1997, when, in a dream, he received a message from his deceased grandfather. This message compelled him to search for an old religious book he vaguely remembered seeing in grandpa's closet. When he found it, a book printed in Turkey a hundred or so years ago, he saw three names scribbled in Arabic by an unknown hand. Alongside them was a translation in Western script: "Imam Abdul Karriem, son of Imam Abdul Jaliel, son of Imam Ismail of Sumbawa."

Abdul Karriem, who died in 1904, was Ebrahiem's great-grandfather, which meant that Ebrahiem was a descendant of someone called "Ismail of Sumbawa." Further inquiries revealed that Sumbawa was an island near Bali from which the Cape's Dutch governors imported some sixty slaves. Ebrahiem was suddenly stricken by a yearning to learn more. He got wind of an ancient tome that had lain for generations in the archive of Simon's Town mosque – the Red Kitaab, sometimes known as the Kitaab of Ismail. Could this Ismail and "Ismail of Sumbawa" be one and the same? Nobody knew. The symbols in the Kitaab looked Arabic, but the words they spelled out made no sense to Islamic scholars.

Ebrahiem decided there was only one thing for it: he had to take the Red Kitaab to Sumbawa and get someone to decipher it. He saved his pennies and set forth for Indonesia in 1999, guided all the time by powerful spiritual forces which kept "engulfing" and "overwhelming" him. At one point, for instance, he was compelled to get off the bus, because this was surely the place he was seeking. In this manner, he was eventually steered to a village where he met a mystic who said his coming had been anticipated.

The people of this village, which is called Pemangong, informed him that the Red Kitaab was written in Sumbawanese, the ancient language of their island. According to Ebrahiem, they cried as they read it, for it told the story of their lost own ancestor, Prince Ismail Dea Malela, a "resistance fighter" captured by the Dutch circa 1750 and brought to the Cape in chains along with his father, Abdulkader. Ebrahiem was ecstatic. This Prince Ismail and the "Ismail of Sumbawa" mentioned in his grandfather's book were surely one and the same. Ebrahiem Manuel had royal blood in his veins!

Or did he? Before anyone could be sure, there was a test to pass. The village chief, Abdulatief Sirat, took Ebrahiem to a grave on a mountaintop, where he was once again overwhelmed by supernatural powers. Said powers caused the earth around the grave to quake, but movement ceased when Ebrahiem laid a hand on the stone. At this, the watchers cried out in awe, saying, "Behold! It is he! The one whose return was prophesied!" They then slaughtered the fatted calf and held a great feast, in the course of which Ebrahiem Manuel

of Grassy Park was anointed a Prince of the Royal House of Dea.

Ebrahiem returned in triumph to Cape Town, imbued with a sacred mission. He was now "The Chosen One," anointed by higher powers to publicize the story of Prince Ismail and his sufferings in "the Dreaded Slave Dungeons." The Dutch and British governments were invited to meet with the Prince's descendants to discuss compensation. The Indonesian and South African governments were asked to finance slavery history projects.

Some of these letters were signed "Lalu (prince) Ebrahiem Dea Melela," and festooned with official-looking stamps identifying the writer as a member of "The Royal House of Dea, Simon's Town."

Commoners were impressed. Lalu Ebrahiem was profiled in South African and Indonesian newspapers, featured in a TV documentary. His story was told in a coffee table book (with photographs by David Goldblatt and foreword by Mandela) produced under a grant from the Dutch government, which put the photographs and text on display in Amsterdam's Tropical Museum. A similar display, with the Red Kitaab as centerpiece, was mounted in Indonesia.

The story told in these various forums touched everyone. As Mr AE Reed of

the Simon's Town Historical Society put it, "How wonderful to finally find out where one belongs." Ebrahiem himself was equally eloquent. It is "grossly unfair," he once wrote, to describe Muslims brought to the Cape by the Dutch as mere slaves. "There were many royal, noble and scholarly figures among them." His own story proved the point. He had delved into the past, and come back with something to be proud of. The applause was deafening. But was the story true?

In November, 2006, two dignified Muslim ladies in headscarves knocked on Mr Nose's door, saying they wished to expose an injustice. Mrs Juleigha Waggie, a mother of seven, was carrying a plastic bag full of documents. Her sister, Farieda, had come to lend moral support. Mrs Waggie reached into her bag and produced an ancient tome: the Red Kitaab. She laid it on the desk and began to tell a story.

She was born Juleigha Anthony, a daughter of what she claims is the oldest Muslim family in Simon's Town. She says her granny used to tell a *spook storie* involving a slave ancestor named Antonie, brought to Simon's Town in chains by the Dutch and locked in a dungeon. According to legend, Antonie escaped, stole a boat and sailed away to Cape Point, where he took refuge in a cave. The Dutch could never catch him, because he was a Sufi mystic who could make himself invisible. As a child,



Wing and a prayer: Ebrahiem Manuel received a message in a dream



Tome time: Farieda (left) and Juleigha Waggie at Juleigha's home in Grassy Park, with the red kitaab, which they claim was written by their supposed ancestor Sheig Anthonie

she was taken to his hideout, which the family called Antoniesgat. Powerful spirits seemed to lurk nearby.

Circa 2001, Juleigha met Ebrahiem for the first time. Prior to this, Ebrahiem had never heard of Antonie, but he liked the story, especially the bit about escaping from "Dreaded Slave Dungeons." He put two and two together and decided that Antonie and Prince Ismail of Sumbawa were probably the same person. His grounds for this are somewhat shaky. We do not know that Antonie really existed, and Prince Ismail is also shrouded in mystery. Ebrahiem says the oral history of Sumbawa mentions such a man – but his name does not appear in the records of the Dutch East India Company, which is odd. The Dutch usually made quite a fuss of royal exiles, providing a stipend that enabled them to maintain a dignified lifestyle.

But Ebrahiem was not concerned about the lack of corroboration, because the oral histories of oppressed people are just as valid as records kept by imperialists, not so? He felt entirely justified in weaving the story of Antonie into his larger fable. Juleigha felt he was appropriating a story that belonged to her family, but she was initially willing to tolerate this because his heart seemed to be in the right place. "I said, 'Overlook his tattoos. Give him a chance

to make something of himself.'" But when it emerged that Ebrahiem was intent on making money, she stripped her *moer*.

It is not clear that Ebrahiem has made a cent, but Juleigha believes otherwise. She believes the SA government has at least promised him money. Big money. "*Hy dink die government gaan hom geld gee omdat hy royalty is,*" she snorts." (He thinks the government is going to give him money because he's royalty.) So she set out to prove he wasn't.

Firstly, she retrieved the Red Kitaab. She claims it belongs to her family, and that it was restored to her rightful possession before witnesses. Ebrahiem says she borrowed it and never gave it back. Whatever the truth, the Red Kitaab wound up in Juleigha's hands. In 2003, she took it to Sumbawa, and returned with a very different story to Ebrahiem's.

Let's start with those mysterious hieroglyphs. Juleigha maintains the writings in the Red Kitaab are sacred and cannot be handed to unauthorized parties for translation. She was, however, willing to have one critical passage privately deciphered, in the interests of exposing Ebrahiem's fabrications. According to Juleigha, the text does not speak of heroic anti-imperial resistance, capture and slavery. It says, "I am sit-

ting beside a calm sea, on white sand, in a cave, meditating on the word of The Prophet," or words to that effect. In her estimation, this proves the Kitaab was written either by or about Antonie, her ancestor.

What's more, she claims Ebrahiem garbled almost everything he was told by the royals of Pemangong, who, she says, were in any case but remote and impoverished in-laws with no claim to royal glory. She says the real Sumbawanese royal family is the House of Kaharrudin, and that the name of the Sultan who allegedly went missing around 1750 was actually Mogamat Abdul Kaharrudin. He, too, does not feature in Dutch East India Company records, but no matter – Juleigha was onto something. She says the name Baharroedin has occurred in her family since time immemorial. Baharroedin is quite close to Kaharrudin, not so? Could be. Maybe the Dutch wrote it down wrong. If so, the Baharroedin Anthonys of Simon's Town were surely related to the royal Kaharrudins of Sumbawa. And if the Baharroedins were really Kaharrudins, it more or less followed that Antonie was just a slave name bestowed by the Dutch on her illustrious ancestor, the Sultan Kaharrudin.

On this basis Juleigha began a campaign to discredit Ebrahiem, accusing him of "fraud, corruption and lying." He retaliated by charging her with stealing the Red Kitaab. In response, she swore an affidavit stating that Ebrahiem had absconded with what she describes as video footage of the ghost of Antoniesgat. She also lodged complaints with the Cape Family Research Forum and the SA Heritage Resource Agency, urging them to have nothing more to do with this imposter.

Somewhere along the line, Juleigha forged an alliance with Simon's Town Museum, then curated by Cherry Dilley. When the New Dawn broke over SA in 1994, Mrs Dilley and friends found themselves horribly exposed. Her museum focused almost exclusively on white Simon's Town. An entire room was devoted to Just Nuisance, a dog who became an honorary Royal Navy seaman during World War II. Coloureds, who came to the town as slaves only to be kicked out under apartheid, merited only a few pictures.

Clearly, this would not do. Mrs Dilley's museum had to transform. She decided that if the slave Antonie really existed, and had indeed been incarcerated in "Dreaded Slave Dungeons," those dungeons most likely lay in the basement of her own building.

Again, this contention is not backed

by hard evidence. The building that houses Mrs Dilley's museum was erected long after the slave trade was abolished. On the other hand, it was built atop the ruins of an even older building, so who is to say that the cells in its basement did not once house slaves?

As it happens, Juleigha Waggie is a psychic of sorts. She reported feeling emanations of the supernatural as she passed a certain wall in Simons Town Museum. This was confirmed by other psychics, who were overwhelmed during a séance in Mrs Dilley's basement by visions of slaves being flogged with the cat o' nine tails. Shortly thereafter, the museum put up an exhibit devoted to the slave Antonie and his dramatic escape, probably from this very building.

This exhibit relied entirely on Juleigha's version. Museum staff say Ebrahiem threw a tantrum and uttered threats at the exhibit's opening, but he was unworried about the "distortions" on display because he, too, had a psychic on his side – a Ms Wambach of Kalk Bay, who could attest that his version was the correct one. He also had a museum that believed in him – the Simon's Town Heritage Museum, located a few hundred metres away, which features a rival exhibit based on Ebrahiem's tale.

Juleigha sees herself as the victim of a far-reaching conspiracy aimed at robbing her of her heritage. She notes that Ebrahiem has a part-time job at the Ocean View Development Trust, which is run by the brother of a prominent ANC politician, who is in turn connected to Western Cape Premier Ibrahim Rasool, who is connected to Arts and Culture Minister Pallo Jordan, who is allegedly on the brink of giving Ebrahiem R5 million to set up certain "slavery history projects." She says: "I've tried to stop this man but no ways – he's got connections, so all the fraud can go on and on."

Ebrahiem says he has applied for funding but hasn't got it, at least in part because of the trouble Juleigha has stirred up. As far as he's concerned, she just wants to destroy his projects because she's jealous. "I told her we are all one big family, we Simon's Town Muslims, and that I wanted to work with her and share the credit. But she wasn't interested. She just kept on." In July 2006, Ebrahiem took his case to the Muslim Judicial Council, which

summonsed Juleigha to answer a charge of fraud.

Spare a thought for Sheikh Monieb Abrahams, appointed to adjudicate a dispute in which the chief witness died centuries ago. To be sure, Ebrahiem can produce several boxes of "Valid and Authentic Historical Evidence," but on closer inspection, most of it is useless: if a document fails to support his contentions, Ebrahiem simply changes it. When he couldn't find Ismail's name among those of Sumbawanese slaves, for instance – he just Tippexed out the first name on the list and wrote "Ismail" in its place. A note alongside says: "Rectified by E. Manuel." One hesitates to use the term forgery in this context. Ebrahiem is just setting down the truth as revealed to him by higher powers.

Juleigha is inclined to resort to similar stratagems. Indeed, she says the reason she knows Antonie and the lost Sultan are the same person is that she has been visited (in her lounge) by his spirit.



At this point, even the contents of the Red Kitaab are in dispute. Ebrahiem says one thing, Juleigha another. The only fragment independently translated suggests that the Kitaab might actually be the work of a writer

practicing his penmanship by copying religious texts. At times, he strings words and letters together in meaningless sequences, like, "bat, bit, but, tat, tit," and so forth. "Lots of fooling around here," remarked the translator.

Sheikh Abrahams declines to discuss the case, other than to say he is "not a historian" and is finding it difficult to determine where truth lies.

The first two hearings in his court ended inconclusively. The third, which took place last September, featured a bombshell in the form of a fax from Haryadi Suhadi, the interpreter who accompanied Ebrahiem on his 1999 pilgrimage to Sumbawa. In his fax to Abrahams, Suhadi says he was shocked to learn that Ebrahiem had solicited donations on his behalf, "because more than three months I accompanied his mission to find his family in Sumbawa but I got nothing. Now I would like you to know about my bad experiences because of Ebrahiem".

Suhadi states that in June last year he guided a honeymoon couple to Komodo Island to see the dragons. On the way back they stopped off on Sumbawa, where he was recognized by a certain

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Mr Suko Irawan, who demanded to know what had become of all the tourists Ebrahiem had promised to send. According to Suhadi, Mr. Irawan, who owns a museum, was also astounded to hear that his name had been put forth as an expert who could confirm the accuracy of Ebrahiem's claims to being a Sumbawane prince and so forth. "I don't believe it," said Mr. Irawan. "This is very nonsense."

In the village of Pemangong, the ancient chief Abdulatief Sirat wanted to know what happened to his "chap," or royal stamp, which disappeared during Ebrahiem's visit. "Abdulatief was sure Ebrahiem had stolen his chap," says Suhadi, who was so humiliated by his association with a man who might stoop to such a deed that he had decided to disclose the true meaning of the title conferred on Ebrahiem by the villagers of Pemangong.

"Ebrahiem was very happy and proud

with his title, and even told to the people that he is 'Prince Dea Malela.' I was very ashamed to translate because the meaning of 'Dea Malela' is 'licking the plate.'" Suhadi assumes the old chief realized his visitor was a chancer and decided to take the mickey out of him.

Pemangong's political leaders had other grievances. Ebrahiem had promised to raise funds to pave the roads, build a hospital, and renovate the mosque. Nothing had come of this, and the villagers wanted to know why. "I felt my head would blow up," said Mr. Suhadi. "I realized if I was angry the people could kill me. I explained to them carefully that I never, never, never promised them anything. I only translated. Finally, thank Allah, they did understand that I was only a translator."

Suhadi goes on to describe Ebrahiem's attempts to convince a local hotel owner that his mission enjoyed the support of

the SA government. "I was very ashamed to translate Ebrahiem's words asking free room, free food, free everything," writes Suhadi. His fax concludes: "The Pemangong Communities did not give any permission to Ebrahiem Manuel to have Exhibition or Publication or anything. If he still does this, he is stealing from the people of Sumbawa."

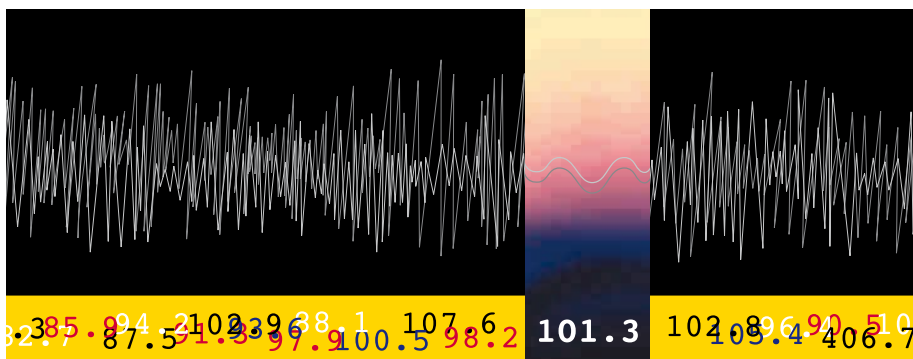
Ebrahiem is serenely unperturbed by these charges. "That fax is fabricated," he says. "I contacted Suhadi and he knows nothing about it." After our interview, he wrote to his enemies, warning that a scandal was about to break. "Hadji Juleigha needs to be very careful," he said. "How will she cope with all the publicity surrounding a case of corruption and fraud? How will her family handle the stigma?"

Cape Town's Muslim scholars and historians won't discuss the case on the record, but in private, they roll their eyes. They say there is no hard evidence to back any of the contesting claims, and that the feud is just generating *gilaaf*, or trouble, and making light of an extremely sombre subject: the history of slavery in the Cape. "So these people want to claim they're Indonesian royalty," said one academic. "So what?"

These learned persons will be relieved to hear that Sheikh Abrahams of the MJC is thinking of hiring Ebrahim Rhoda as consultant. Mr Rhoda is a retired school principal who lives on the far side of False Bay, in Strandfontein. Ten years ago, he was in much the same position as Ebrahiem Manuel and Juleigha Waggie – a coloured person who grew up with stories about slave ancestors named Leander and Jacobus. Armed with just those first names, Mr Rhoda dug into the archives, and was eventually able to reconstruct his family's history in vivid detail. He identified the farms where they worked in chains, the insults and suffering they endured and their minor triumphs after emancipation, when they established a fishing village on the beach some two hundred metres not from where he lives today. Rhoda's thesis on his family is regarded as a masterpiece and has just earned him a master's degree *cum laude* from the University of the Western Cape.

Years ago, Ebrahiem Manuel said: "I'm just an ordinary person, trying to find out who I am and where I come from and to have a history I can be proud of." He has pursued his quest with great passion. The same is true of Juleigha Waggie. Both seem bent on discovering glory in their bloodlines, but Rhoda's work shows that the ordinary can be great, too. Perhaps there is a lesson here. ■

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Wreckers rule in Joburg

*History – and the law – don’t mean a thing
when there’s money to be made*

SOUTH AFRICA has got big on heritage – languages, traditional knowledge, plants medicine, anthropological sites, San paintings, praise poetry – you name it, we want to protect it. And rightly so.

Back in 1996 the Department of Arts, Culture and Technology described heritage as “the sum total of the wildlife and scenic parks, sites of scientific or historical importance, national monuments, historic buildings, works of art, literature and music, oral traditions and museum collections, together with their documentation”.

Quite clearly heritage includes historic buildings, and obviously we look after them, carefully preserving them for future generations. Dream on china!

But take a drive through Houghton one of these days – that gracious old Johannesburg suburb where the Randlords built their beautiful mansions in the early decades of the 20th century, commissioning the services of heavyweight architects like Sir Herbert

Baker and Gordon Leith. You’ll still find wonderful old homes it’s true. You’ll also pause in wonder at the alarming number of vacant sites, enclosing sad little piles of bricks and rubble. Talk about gazing on the scattered ruins of a lost civilization.

Try the wonderful Houghton Drive, and look out for numbers 33, 41, 50, 89, 90 and 108. Or cruise down Fourth Street and check out the corners of Second Avenue and Fourth Avenue. Look out for 3 Ninth Avenue. Or just drive around at random. Take good note of how many pretentious office parks (try Central Avenue) and architecturally jumbled clusters have sprouted like alien mushrooms – where once stood grand houses, temples of another time. And, yes, there’s an awful lot of traffic.

Now we’re not complete boors, you know, we have our Heritage Act, which makes things perfectly clear: where a building is more than sixty years old, it’s illegal to “alter or demolish” it without a permit from the relevant provin-

cial heritage resources authority. Since 2003 each province has had its own Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (PHRA), among whose tasks is the protection of old buildings in its area.

Robyn Heathfield is a successful



Bulldozing: Under the phone number it reads: 'Thanks God. Amen'

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businesswoman with a passion for old buildings, who has a long association with Houghton. When the growing problem became apparent some time back, she co-founded the Houghton Heritage Trust, whose purpose was to stop the demolition of old homes and halt the relentless development. For a time the trust's members patrolled the streets in fast cars (if you can afford Houghton you have several cool cars) looking for signs of development. The trust objected to proposed demolitions, raised public awareness and galvanizing local opinion.

Robyn has since moved out of the area and the Houghton Heritage Trust has lost steam – one of its members has had a death threat, which hasn't helped. In fact, talking to residents, you get the distinct impression they've pretty much given up the fight, resigning themselves to their suburb going the way of so many others in Johannesburg.

Yet the regulations are in place to prevent the destruction of old Houghton, of significant portions of our architectural heritage and therefore, ultimately, of the landscape of how Johannesburg came to be what it is – the most vibrant, richest city in Africa.

It's the Johannesburg City Council's duty to approve all redevelopment plans, including proposals to replace single houses with clusters. Where the building isn't more than sixty years old the council can make the call alone, although it usually does consult one of the two Houghton Residents' Associations for an opinion – which would be meaningful if developers didn't sit on these bodies.

Where the house is more than sixty years old, the council can't grant approval until the PHRA has approved demolition. Instead what often happens is the council simply grants approval for redevelopment of old houses without getting approval from PHRA. Furthermore, in order for interested parties to have a chance to object, all redevelopment plans must be advertised – but this seems to be avoided as far as possible. This then sees the PHRA approving demolition requests because it has received no objections.

Completely ridiculous, says Heathfield: "Not only is it irresponsible for the PHRA to assume that interested parties are always aware of the proposed demolition, but for PHRA to adopt a passive stance is a complete abdication of responsibility. Surely it has a duty to examine the architectural merit of the building, irrespective of whether or not there has been an objection?"

According to Heathfield, the ploys of the developers are many and varied. One is to buy an old house, leave it standing empty for a few years, then, when it's right off the radar, demolish it and put up clusters. A quicker way is to make sure that the house falls into a bad state of disrepair – a surefire method for this involves inviting in the squatters, leaving locals so horrified that they welcome any redevelopment, no matter how crass.

Another old trick is to have your people remove fixtures and fittings during the week (the dozy neighbours think renovation work is going on), and then



Cluster bluster: 49 Houghton Drive, previously Heatherbrae

at the weekend (with the locals all away at Sun City or Dullstroom) you knock the house down.

Although the suburb has seen literally scores of demolitions and redevelopments over the past few years, *noseweek* can share a couple of prime examples of the devastation being wreaked in search of a buck.

A Mr Darsot bought a wonderful 1929 mansion at 49 Houghton Drive (Heatherbrae), and brought in architect Zaid Cassim. According to an investigation at the time, the plans for Heatherbrae were falsified to show that it was built in the 1950s and therefore not subject to heritage protection, and a rezoning order. The Houghton Heritage Trust alerted the PHRA that the house was being illegally demolished, and Darsot was promptly ordered to stop. When he disregarded the instruction and went ahead, the PHRA took him to court but the case was thrown out. The site is now occupied by eight ever-so-tasteful clusters.

Neurosurgeon Girish Modi bought a 1931 mansion on the corner of Third Street and Eight Avenue, and he too demolished without a permit – once again an order requiring him to stop was issued but ignored. The property now boasts what appears to be two units.

These developers clearly aren't people you'd approach for a second hand car deal, but they're not alone. The estate agents don't exactly help – in Houghton estate agents don't advertise a home's "sparkling pool", "ideal position" or "unsurpassed views", but that it is "ripe for demolition". As for the PHRA, Heathfield says that the feeling among residents, and those who've been in-

The issue has been simmering for some time. Way back in 1995, one Thepiso Mashini, an adviser to the Johannesburg Council, had this to

Best not tell the Prez this story. As reported in *nose83*, the Mbekis are building a rather magnificent retirement pad in Houghton. Won't they be charmed to find themselves surrounded, not by properties of similar stature, but by a bunch of ugly clusters. [\[7\]](#)



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Sustained Impact



SHORTLY AFTER 5 AM on New Year's Day 2004 a speeding white Toyota Corolla driven by 24-year-old Johann Ferreira careered round a bend on a deserted country road outside the hamlet of Collen Glen, near Port Elizabeth.

Deserted, that is, but for a pink Citi-Golf approaching the curve from the opposite direction. Ferreira failed to make the curve, went into a skid and crashed sideways into the oncoming Golf. Its two occupants, 36-year-old Chalice Nottingham and her brother's girlfriend, 29-year-old Sara-Jane Goldston, were killed on impact.



Picture: The Herald

Fined: Johann Ferreira leaving court

Justice delayed means torture for crash victims, their families and the accused

Ferreira, then a sales rep in Port Elizabeth, was charged with two counts of culpable homicide, alternatively reckless driving. Six weeks ago, after a trial that had dragged on for three years and 20 postponements, he was found guilty in Port Elizabeth's North End magistrate's court on both counts of culpable homicide and fined R8000, or two years' imprisonment. His defence costs exceeded R100,000.

Ferreira's attorney, Lunen Meyer, argued that his client needed his driver's licence for his job – and Magistrate Van der Westhuisen imposed no driving ban.

Sworn statements from ambulance workers and policemen at the accident scene testified that Johann Ferreira smelt of liquor, and was drunk and abusive. Incredibly, he was not breathalysed and no blood test was taken in

hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries.

The family of Chalice Nottingham was incensed that Ferreira was not charged with drunken driving.

The endless court postponements meant they got no resolution, and were left with the impression that their daughter's death was not taken seriously.

Family members and supporters attended every one of the 20 hearings. At one stage Chalice's younger sister Sandra Chéze carried two poster-sized photographs of the crashed cars into court. She waved them at Magistrate Van der Westhuisen and planted them before Ferreira, telling him: "In case you've forgotten, see what you have done! Would you like to hang them on your wall?"

At every hearing the Nottinghams sat immediately behind Ferreira so, as Chalice's father, Rory, puts it, "our nasty ripostes that we've been practising will have best effect." At a hearing shortly before judgment, Rory Nottingham tried to persuade the magistrate to have Ferreira arrested on the grounds that he was a "flight risk".

During the trial Ferreira moved to Gauteng and Rory Nottingham wrote to his new employers informing them about the culpable homicide charges. He is now trying to hunt down Ferreira's present employers.

Most disquieting of all for Ferreira is the anonymous SMSs to his cellphone, of the "Killed anyone today?" variety.

But before we go into that, let's try to reconstruct the New Year's Eve party build-up to the fatal death crash.

Chalice Nottingham was the eldest of Rory and Tricia Nottingham's three adult offspring. The senior Nottinghams live at Port Elizabeth's Summerstrand (Rory was credit manager at the local Standard Bank). Chalice, a restaurant waitress who teamed up with a boy-

friend to sing at birthday parties, was partying the New Year in at her sister Sandra's smallholding at Colleen Glen.

Also there was Chalice's brother Philip, an accountant in Johannesburg with PG Glass, and his girlfriend, Sara-Jane Goldston, who worked as a travel agent in Cape Town.

On New Year's Day the sun was already up when a two car convoy left the smallholding shortly after 5am, heading for a small house Chalice had rented in the Port Elizabeth suburb of Sherwood some 10km away. She planned to join her parents later, for a walk on Pollock Beach at Summerstrand.

Philip led the way from the smallholding, driving alone in a Lada 4x4. They decided that Chalice, in a highly emotional state over a domestic upset, should not drive, so Sara-Jane Goldston was at the wheel of Chalice's pink Citi-Golf, in which were also two family dogs, a pointer and a Jack Russell. (Only the Jack Russell was to survive.)

The crash took place a bare minute after they left the smallholding. Philip went round a left hand bend in the Kragga Kamma road and saw a white Toyota approaching him, at a speed he estimated at 130 to 140km/h (in an 80km/h zone). He wondered whether it would make the bend. It disappeared and when the pink Golf failed to appear in his rear view mirror he made a U-turn and discovered the crash.

Johann Ferreira did not give evidence at his trial. His attorney stated that he had suffered amnesia and could remember nothing of the incident.

Ferreira tells *noseweek*: "That New Year's Eve I was at an all-night party in Seaview. It wasn't a booze-up where you drink bottles and bottles of stuff. I was drinking Windhoek Light. I'd just got back from a holiday in the UK, so I was one of the calm, relaxed guys there, because I didn't have any money.

"I remember when 12 o'clock came, everybody spraying champagne, jumping around and hi-fiving each other, saying 'Happy New Year'. And that's about the last thing I remember. I went into Port Elizabeth to pick up something, but I can't remember what I went to pick up. The accident happened on the way back.

"The Nottingham family think I'm lying about not remembering anything. But I really don't!"

An early arrival at the accident scene was former policeman Cornelius Jonck, who found Ferreira sitting in his car.



Driving: Sara Jane Goldston was at the wheel of the Citi-Golf at the time of the fatal crash

"He was smelling strongly of alcohol and could not speak decently," read Jonck's sworn statement. "The man was very aggressive and he swore badly."

Paramedic Albert McCharlie's statement reports: "We noticed that Ferreira was very drunk. He insulted me, saying: 'Fuck off you motherfucker'." The swearing continued while they set up drips and during the ambulance ride to the hospital. "The patient was fully aware of what happened," said McCharlie.

Since Ferreira tells *noseweek* that after midnight everything was a virtual blank, he obviously wouldn't know how much he drank or didn't drink over the next five hours. All he can say is: "You drink one



Grief: Sandra Chéze with her sister Chalice Nottingham (left) who died in the crash

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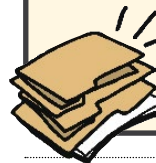
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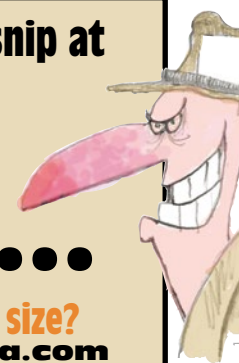
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drink and you smell of alcohol and obviously there was alcohol on my clothes, because we were spraying champagne over each other at Slade's party."

Last December, before Ferreira was found guilty, his attorney said he had been instructed to tell Chalice's parents that he wished to apologise. The Nottinghams did not accept this apology and say they have not forgiven Ferreira.

Says Tricia Nottingham: "I just feel he's a man of no integrity. He never gave us any kind of indication that he was sorry. I feel very bitter and he's had his lawyers stick up for him through thick and thin with the big lie that he had amnesia. He needs to have learnt a lesson. He should have done some community service."

Rory Nottingham adds: "Ferreira is a danger to society and being still in possession of his driver's licence means he's licensed to kill again. Be warned – past behaviour is the best indicator of future behaviour."

When *noseweek* spoke to Johann Ferreira we found a deeply penitent, emotionally scarred 27-year-old desperately trying to rebuild his life. Of the three-year trial he says: "It was hectic, terrible. If I hadn't found God I would have jumped off a bridge."

How has the accident affected his life? "It's completely changed the focus. I didn't know how I was going to get through it. Then one of my friends took me to church and that's the only place I wanted to be for a long time. I used to be an extreme sports fanatic. Now it feels like my heart's going to stop if I try something that creates any adrenalin."

"It will always be part of my life. The scary thing is that when I was 14 my dad died the same way. Some woman tried to overtake a truck on a solid line and my dad drove into her."

Now working as a sales rep in Gauteng, Ferreira says drinking is "just the occasional beer" and a glass of wine with a meal. "At the moment my life is work and study." (He's doing a B.Com through Unisa.)

Of the anonymous SMSs Ferreira sighs: "I still get abuse. I don't know who's sending them and I can't change my cellphone number because of my work. They make it difficult, as I'm trying to get what happened out of my mind. I pray for some peace. And if the person sending these SMSs finds peace too, I'm sure they will end."

In court Rory Nottingham said under oath that he had not sent any SMSs. "Have any of your family?" he was asked. "I don't know," he replied. He now admits that he knew very well who was sending them – his daughter

Sandra Chéze. "They're mine," Sandra tells *noseweek*. "And they're not very nice ones, I admit. It's not good and I'm really not very nice."

She's sent regular reminders every New Year's Eve since the accident and every January 19 – Chalice's birthday. What does she say? "On New Year's Eve it's: 'I hope you're not going to kill

anyone else tonight.' On Chalice's birthday it's 'My sister would be this age, but because of you she's no longer here'."

Ferreira's attorney says that if the identity of the SMS writer emerges, he will seek an interdict and damages for harassment. But Johann Ferreira just shakes his head: "I only want them to find peace," he sighs. **W**

Eight years on and Thembi is still waiting

SCHOOLGIRL THEMBI MGCINA is now 16 – and it's nearly eight years since she sustained serious head and leg injuries when she was hit by a car near her home in an East Rand township (noses 76 and 78). A year ago Glenrand MIB chairman Allan Mansfield, in his capacity as managing director of the Attorneys Insurance Indemnity Fund (AIIF), assured *noseweek* there would be a speedy resolution of her R4m claim.

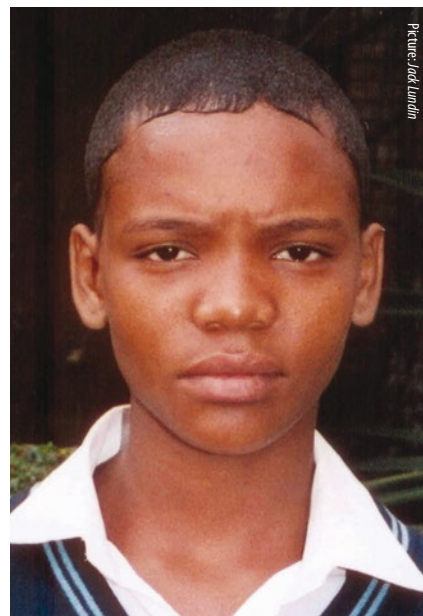
"We will review it," he affirmed, "and it will not take months and months, there's no point in dragging it out if we don't have to."

Now the AIIF's general manager, Ann Bertelsmann, tells us: "The board's decision is that they can't make any decision until they have the full facts on Thembi."

Nearly eight years to get "the full facts"? The mind boggles.

In her update, Bertelsmann says that

last December the AIIF's attorney, Clement Shirilele, obtained a medico-legal report from a neurosurgeon. "It suggests that Thembi's head injury may not be as serious as was thought [ie, as claimed by Thembi's attorney, Anthony Millar]," says Bertelsmann. "Now we're



Picture: Irfat Lundin

Half a life: Thembi Mgcina was eight when a car ploughed into her

getting other experts to comment on our neurosurgeon's report. What the board is saying is that at this stage they just can't pay out money.

"Until we've got all the experts together and got some sort of clarity, we really can't take the matter further."

Last March Allan Mansfield imposed a secrecy ban on Thembi's case and decreed that he was the only person empowered to comment on her case. But in his absence – he's enjoying a mega-long holiday and was on a luxury cruise in the Arctic Circle as we went to press – AIIF chairman Thembile Mtati authorised Ann Bertelsmann to give us the latest delay news.

Thembi's attorney, Anthony Millar, says: "Once the last of the medico-legal reports are in there will be serious discussions to try and resolve this matter."

Thembi's claim against the AIIF follows a grossly inadequate settlement of R54,000 for damages and medical expenses, which her then attorney, Admiral Khoza, accepted from the Road Accident Fund. The rogue attorney vanished without trace after handing over just R36,209. **W**



Picture: Business Day

At sea: Glenrand boss Allan Mansfield is at present enjoying a luxury cruise in the Arctic

Goodbye to a courageous adventurer

LIFE WAS NEVER the same for 75-year-old author and traveller Vierentia Beukes after she was paralysed from the waist down in a botched spinal operation (*nose* 84). Last month, on January 11, she ended it all by shooting herself with her husband's revolver at home in Pretoria's Lynnwood Glen.

In our story last October we told how Mrs Beukes was seeking R1.4m damages from Pretoria orthopaedic surgeon Dr Jakes van der Westhuizen, claiming that he acted negligently during a March 2005 back operation which left her a paraplegic.

Although in constant and appalling pain, she bravely hit the road with husband Teddy to research and write a book on wheelchair-friendly guest houses and holiday destinations. But adapting to life in a wheelchair was hell for the adventure-loving writer – her books include *The Killer Foods of the 20th Century and How to Avoid Them* (1974) and *The Complete Pet Bird Owner's Handbook* (1993).

Vierentia and Teddy had been happily married for 47 years. Mr Beukes, 76, is a dentist who still practises from a home surgery. On January 11 he was out, conducting one of his regular teaching sessions at the University of Pretoria's dental school. Mrs Beukes sent the maid to the library, took Teddy's revolver from the safe, wheeled herself into the ground floor shower – and pulled the trigger.

She left several letters. In the note to her husband she wrote: "Ted, as you know, my life has been a permanent hell of pain, dependence and again pain. It serves no purpose to suffer like this at this age. I also find it unacceptable that your lifestyle has to fit in with the needs of a wheelchair."

"Forgive me the mess, but I do not have access to 'civilised' tablets."

Of the two surgeons who operated on her spine on 5 March 2005, she added: "I hope Jakes van der Westhuizen and Pieter Slabbert's consciences will ride them until the end of their days."

Mrs Beukes adored her two ageing dogs, an Alsatian and a Dobermann/Rotweiler. In the note to her husband she begged: "Please don't let the dogs suffer the hardship of old age."

In a letter to the police she wrote: "My life has been totally destroyed and

I am dragging my wonderful husband down with me."

The mother of four, with four grandchildren, had been depressed after the court date for her case against Dr van der Westhuizen, scheduled for mid-2008, was postponed to 2009.

Her daughter Theresa van der Merwe, who phoned her mother every morning, says: "She told me she'd got a letter for me, but hadn't got the time to post it. She kept saying: 'I love you very much. Just remember I love you very very much'."

"Mom always said she'd never have the guts to kill herself, but in the end she planned it so well. She's in a better place now; she had suffered so terribly."



Vierentia Beukes

My dad's devastated and I'm sad for him. He lived for her and loved her so much."

Mrs Beukes also wrote to her executor at FNB, instructing that her damages case against Dr van der Westhuizen be dropped, to save her estate being decimated by legal fees. She also instructed that the complaint she filed against Van der Westhuizen with the Health Professions Council of South Africa be withdrawn.

This final gesture will clear the way for Van der Westhuizen's planned emigration to Australia. Before a doctor can take employment abroad, he has to obtain a Certificate of Good Standing from the council. Which can't be issued while there's a complaint pending. **IN**

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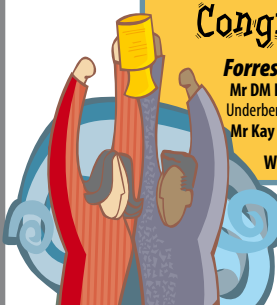
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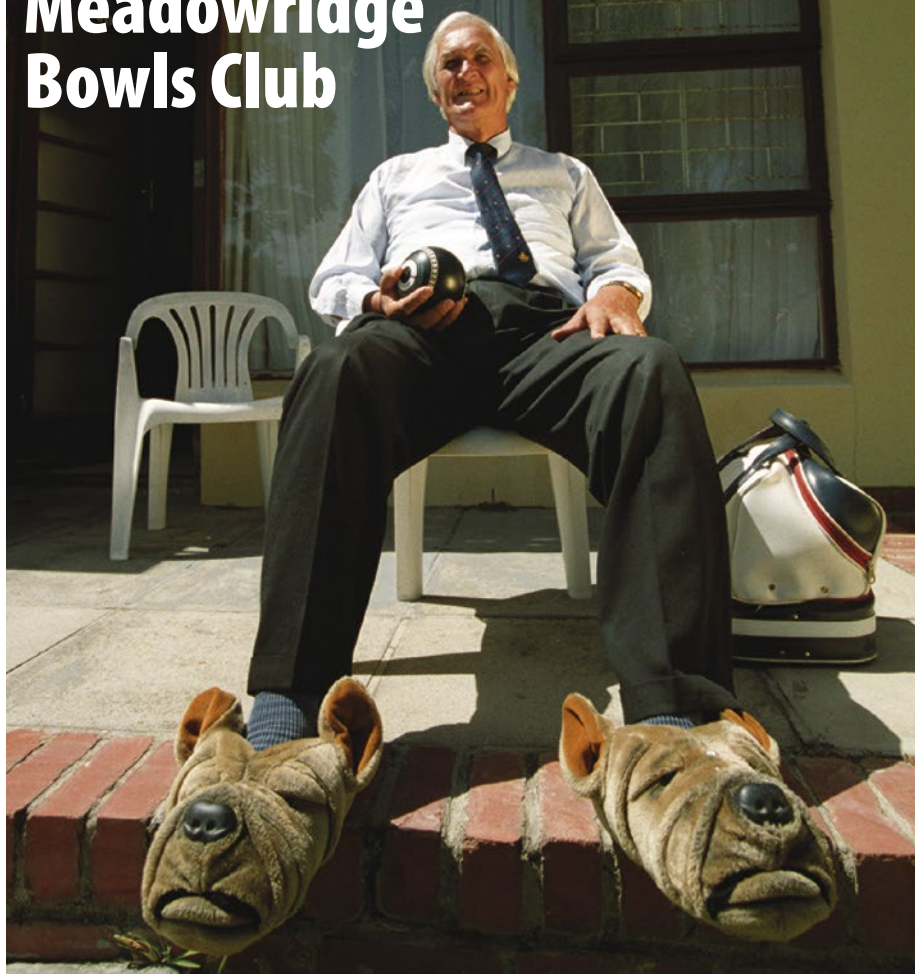
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Welcome back in the fold.



The puppy slippers that caused the rumpus at Meadowridge Bowls Club

Picture: Adam Weiz



Woof woof: Terry Theunissen and the offending articles that got him shoo-ed away

MORE EVIDENCE HAS emerged of the unruly passions which rage beneath some chaps' crisply-ironed bowling whites.

Following our exposé of the *skande* at Inanda (nose87), we have discovered that at the Meadowridge Bowling Club in Cape Town, too, personal antagonism among members has culminated in court action.

In January, disgruntled club member Terry Theunissen (68) obtained an urgent interdict from the Wynberg Magistrates' Court barring all members of the club from playing in official matches – not just on their own greens, but anywhere else in town.

The court also ordered the club to reinstate Theunissen, whose membership was suspended earlier in the month when he failed to pay outstanding dues.

Only swift action by the club's

lawyers succeeded in overturning the playing ban – just hours before the first kitty was rolled for the start of the midweek fixtures. The case is due to be heard again on 8 February.

But what could have driven a man to take such drastic measures against his own club?

Theunissen says he is only responding to a sustained campaign of "malice, meanness and lies" conducted against him since shortly after he joined Meadowridge a year ago.

He blames "a clique" of long-serving members for snubbing him, attacking him, spreading vicious rumours about him and hijacking his game. Among the people he fingers are club manager Mervyn Fortuin, Men's President Bill McCarthy, greenkeeper Keith Cato and ordinary member Neville Doveton, described by Theunissen as an "arrogant bully".

He says he repeatedly asked the committee to take disciplinary action against his tormenters, but they ignored him. "These people are untouchable. They're Royal Game," he says.

Theunissen, who had never bowled before joining the club, also complains that the selectors have consistently overlooked him for important matches and refused to promote him to skip, even though other players have described him as "a natural".

But what most outrages him is an anonymous accusation that he routinely carries a firearm on the green.

He said he had been informed of the complaint by long-standing member John Morgan, but neither Morgan nor anyone on the committee would reveal the source.

"It's ridiculous. I haven't owned a gun for eight years."

He said the rumour had "poisoned" people against him.

Asked why he thought he had been targeted, Theunissen insists he has no idea.

"Maybe it's because when I first joined the club, I wore my big, funny slippers that look like puppy dogs because I couldn't find bowling shoes in my size and they thought I was showing off."

"Or maybe it was because I hit the jack eight times in my first game. Maybe it's jealousy."

He says the "old guard" seems to resent newcomers, especially if they take their bowls seriously.

"They are running a social club disguised as a bowls club. They're less interested in the game than in getting together to spread malicious gossip. They feel threatened by anyone new who shows some ability."

Even before his suspension, Theunissen was moved to write to the sport's international governing body, World Bowls Ltd in Scotland, calling for an investigation into the conduct of the club.

In the letter he claims the committee has "little regard for promoting the game among newcomers ... whilst regarding the game and the club team as being the private little preserve of the favoured few".

He also complains that this group has "a limited and/or warped knowledge and understanding of the practical aspects of the game".

Meadowridge Bowling Club is by no means the first organisation Theunissen has taken to court. Among a string of other actions, he claims to have sued the entire Commonwealth for AU\$250 000 (R1.4-million) while he was living in Australia. But he says he can't reveal whether he won or not.

He denies that his current action is frivolous.

"This is all the committee's fault," he says. "I have made it clear that I will drop my action if they will only name and expel whoever started the rumour that I carry a gun."

"They have refused to respond to my offer. So they are the ones wasting the court's time.

"These people think they can do anything they like and get away with it. But they don't know who they're dealing with. I don't take shit from anybody."

In a written response to our request for comment, club treasurer Mike Higgins said: "Any allegations of improper conduct by any member of the Club, or by its Committee, is categorically denied and are being vigorously opposed".

He said when the matter next came to court "the full facts will become public knowledge and interested members of the community will then be able to make up their own minds about the rights and wrongs of the case". ▮

Crazy little thing called protocol

MR NOSE HEARS that the aircraft carrying Tony Blair *et famille* overshot the runway when landing in Miami in December. It wasn't the Blairs' little scare or the controversy surrounding the British PM's jaunt to Bee-Gee's star Robin Gibb's Miami mansion that caught Mr Nose's attention, but rather that Tony, the fragrant Cherie and the Blairlets had travelled on a British Airways commercial carrier with over 300 other passengers.

If Big T (i.e. "target" – for Osama and his murderous pals) can fly commercial, why must our deputy leaderette, who Mr Nose is prepared to wager 90% of the world's population has never heard of, only travel by private aircraft?

"Protocol", the spindoctors say, is the reason for all Mrs Mlambo-Ngcuka's

gravy-planing that has so far cost taxpayers over R5-million.

But Mr Nose has reason to believe it's more to do with Her Upstairs' disdain for slumming it in first class than concerns for her safety.

Well-placed friends in the VIP lounge report that our esteemed semi-president has become so accustomed to the high-life that nothing but the best will do. Not even Pick 'n Pay magnate Raymond Ackerman's private jet was up to scratch, apparently because it had no suitable bed for her to recline in absolute comfort.

No doubt Pumzile "Mile High" Mlambo-Ngcuka likes to lie back, relax and give thanks to those cunning apartheid politicians for introducing that nifty thing called protocol. ▮



SATAN AS A TEENAGER.

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It's just not white!

What's a nice South African Jewish boy, a global management consultant in Boston, doing on Hanover Street with the Kaapse Klopse? Twirling his umbrella and wiggling his hips like a cheerleader?

No, he's not a refugee from a Gay Pride March. Harris Gordon is here with his wife, a photographer for *National Geographic*, among other publications, whose interests include carnivals. They come home to Cape Town every Christmas, and last year Harris marched with the Pennsylvanians, the leading klopse group. Now he's hooked.

"It's a wonderful party. I can't understand why more white Capetonians don't join in. They don't know what they're missing. You put on that outfit and you're a Coon," he says. "It should be a carnival for everyone, like Notting Hill in the UK."

Considering ours is rooted in the slave custom of letting off steam by dressing up and mocking the masters, one might ask whether whites have any right to participate. Certainly that was the thought in the mind of one drunken Coloured bergie when he saw Hollander Trudi Ibrahim marching along merrily with Harris. "Hey, what's this? White people can't be in the Coons! It's not right!" he shouted.

Tell that to Rian Malan. He and his traitor's heart have been happily playing in the band of a klopse troupe, the Continentals – also for the past two years.

[Wat se djy? Isn't this supposed to be an age of transition, transformation and, yes, even crossing over? – Ed.]

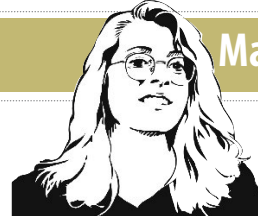


Oko Camngca, Trudy Kragtwyk, Adiel de Lange and Harris Gordon join the Pennsylvanians for Tweede Nuwejaer

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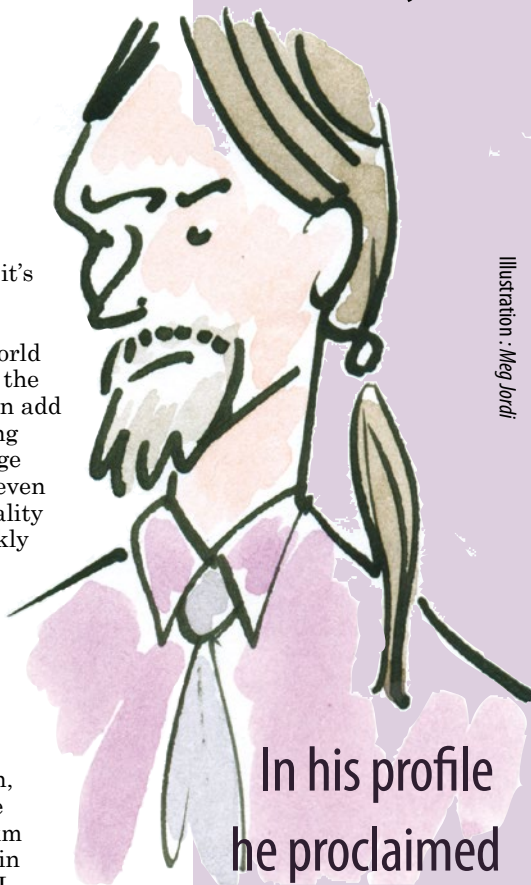
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Mr Pony Tail

Illustration: Meg Jordi



In his profile
he proclaimed
himself
a 'closet
homosexual' –
and included
a snapshot of
two pairs of
bare feet

IF YOU WANT to be “out there” these days, you hang out at MySpace (<http://myspace.com>). It's the in place to be, like the latest trendy nightclub, only easier to get in: you don't have to be beautiful, rich or famous, and it's free.

You join by creating your profile, wherein you tell the world who you are, or who you want the world to think you are. You can add photos and videos and inspiring quotes while painting your page any colour you wish. You can even embellish your virtual personality with flashy graphics and sparkly stuff if you are so inclined.

On MySpace you can, amongst other things, do area searches, browse profiles, contact others, and create a network of virtual friends from here, there, and everywhere.

Being a nosey kind of person, I did a search for all the single men and women within a 10 km radius of home. Though I live in a smallish town in Kentucky, I found hundreds of local profiles. As I browsed, I found a familiar face: the big yellow-haired woman who works at the supermarket checkout. She has a passion for fairies and angels – how can I ever look at her again without thinking of showers of pixie dust and space cadets?

I found another familiar face: “Startin’ to get a little Pooh Bear belly here, guess that’s just middle-age spread,” confesses my mechanic... which is perhaps a little more than I needed to know about the guy who services my car. Next time he’s writing out my invoice, I just know I’ll be thinking, “Pooh Bear belly!”

But the point is, you never know who might bump into your virtual self on the World Wide Web. You might be forgiven for thinking one has a measure of anonymity hanging out in cyberspace – there’s an element of “alone in a crowd”. But you never know who might be smiling in recognition while reading your profile, and relishing the thought of exposing your virtual life.

Let me tell you a story. This happened to a friend of mine, swear to bob. She’s

a social worker in Kentucky. Following the corporate fad, her non-profit agency spent a small fortune hiring consultants who promised to “streamline the business” and “maximize efficiency”. The resulting reorganization left her with a boss (let’s call him Mr Ponytail) who knew little about social work but had a reputation for his “management skills” and ability to humour the board of directors. You know the type.

Mr Ponytail managed to alienate the whole office within weeks. Now everyone was spending more time filling in forms than doing their real jobs of taking care of Kentucky’s large share of the poor and desperate. The workers bitched and moaned. If only there were a way to get rid of him...

Then one day, while doing some office “research”, someone stumbled across Mr Ponytail’s profile on MySpace.com, replete with smiling photograph and first name. In his profile he proclaimed himself a “closet homosexual” – and included a snapshot of two pairs of bare feet, one pair placed suggestively behind the other, with the caption “What Would Jesus Do?”

Now you’ve got to remember, folks, this is The Bible Belt. If you don’t love the flag, pumpkin pie and Jesus, it’s best you keep it to yourself.

As is so often the tendency of juicy news, it quickly spread. Soon, an anonymous employee printed Mr Ponytail’s profile and sent it off to head office, whereupon Mr Ponytail was confronted by management about his abhorrent conduct. After all, he was in Social Services and a measure of decorum is called for in this line of work. Mr Ponytail promptly removed his profile from MySpace.com and emailed a bumbling apology to everyone. He even changed his hairstyle. But it was too late. Management had already decided to demote him.

He left with his ponytail between his legs, his climb up the corporate ladder forever compromised.

The moral of the story? Unless you enjoy living on the edge and want your mother, your priest or your boss to meet your alter ego, you’d better not be putting anything on the internet you don’t want everyone to know.

Or one day some stranger may blurt “Pooh Bear belly!” at you as you stroll through the mall. **W**



Mogens Tholstrup, Gina Athans and Anthony Hamilton Russell



it has already been shown at Everard Read and sold for the kind of prices that must bring tears to the eyes of the Chinese.

But it's a milestone show that merits a repeat performance, Anthony informs the assembled gathering.

Too style-conscious and suave for his own good probably, Anthony has opted for an interesting outfit which he admits his daughters think looks "gay". Tight white Levis that make his long legs look endless. A pink-and-blue-striped shirt from Hawes and Curtis shirtmakers in Jermyn Street. Shoes from Crockett and Jones.

Olive, his second wife, is in Diane von Furstenberg floaty silk embellished with crystals. A fairy queen. Not a bad choice considering how many titled guests she's entertaining.



Tay Dall with Brian and Emma Menell

From her Napier farm has come Princess Lotti van der Byl – originally Princess Charlotte Maria Benedikta Eleonore Adelheid von und zu Liechtenstein – widow of PK the famously irredeemable Rhodesian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence. Thirty years younger than her late husband, Lotti is here with her nubile middle son, 24-year-old Valerian, fresh from military academy at Cirencester.

Countess Kyne Nislev Bernstorff, also a when-we but married to a Danish count, is hanging about in what looks like a queue for the strawberries

YOU'VE NEVER seen so many men in panama hats. It looks like a Havana cigar-makers' convention. Only there's nothing Cuban or deprived about this party.

These guests are the crème de la very thin layer of Western Cape crème, now boosted a tad during what is laughingly known as the festive season, by all the high-flying young foreigners who've jetted in from the world's ski slopes in their black wraparounds.

They're clearly expecting a fiery South African sun. But the skies are moody over Anthony Hamilton Russell's Georgian palazzo. Clouds hang so low above this astounding Hermanus valley someone aptly named Hemel en Aarde, that it could even rain. So this

year nobody came by helicopter. Not even g-string designer Caprice, who had been threatening to.

Which leaves just the usual old Rovers and Bentleys. It's a helluva drive from Arniston, Constantia and Pringle Bay, but a few hundred have made it. Anthony's annual art bash to launch a new wine has been a fixture on the panama hat brigade's social calendar ever since he created this stately home-cum-art gallery on the family's celebrated estate, one of whose wines was chosen for Mandela's dinner with the Queen of England.

It's a nice little stretch of cool seaside terroir that didn't just land in Anthony's lap like some vine-covered silver spoon – forgive the outrageous mix of metaphors. After he'd been working on it for several years, he bought it from his father Tim to prevent it one day being divided between his siblings. Luckily he'd earned a buck or two during his banking years in London. Twelve years later he's still paying for it. Tim, former owner of J Walter Thompson, is known to drive an iron-fisted bargain.

And here Tim is, gimlet-eyed as ever, with his old ex-Anglo sparring partner Julian Ogilvie Thompson, checking out the art in the spectacular upstairs viewing room. It was designed specifically to showcase the work of Anthony's first wife, artist Arabella Caccia. Though she's since relocated to Cape Town with the girls, her pictures still hang in the livingroom.

This year the gallery is full of Vusi Khumalo's quirky collages inspired by his trip to China, along with the work of the Chinese artists he met. Most of



Lotti and Valerian van der Byl

and blueberries, behind Count Luccio Gottardo. Why is the place swarming with Italians? This one came with Raenette Taljaard, the hard-core young ex DA MP now heading the Helen Suzman Foundation. She was all over the *Sunday Times* recently, the only white in a panel of six political players dissecting the leadership battle.

High-profile beauties litter the front stoep, which has a spectacular view. Gazing mesmerised over the valley is Olive's friend Magda Wierzycka, the tenacious pension fund manager who's just sold African Harvest for R80m. Gina Athans, the long-necked Boere-Greek model from Jozi who recently divorced her gazillionaire Jordanian, is also here, nibbling at the berries in the company of a beautiful black male (UK-educated Jozi banker Martin Mbetsi).

Naturally Anthony's wine mates have made it. And naturally they're not getting plastered as fast as the rest of us on the host's mellow new Ashbourne pinotage. Along with Paul Cluver junior, Joubert Tradouw's Meyer Joubert, and just about the whole Beaumont family – including



Martin Mbetsi, Alex Piets and Jessica Knight

paterfamilias Raoul who's finally sold his Harley – there's George Dalla Cia (son of Giorgio) whose family is about to open a taverna in Stellenbosch, and Buitenverwachting's Lars Maack making a rare public appearance in spite of the new family.

Yet it's not all jolly. There are a few people who're trying to avoid each

other. And did Pam Golding spot some fly in the social ointment, I wonder, when she arrived and stood at the top of the steps? Is that why she turned around and went back to her Hermanus holiday home?

Nothing is ever simple on the social network. Not even here on this sliver of paradise between heaven and earth. **W**

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What, me worry?

CLIMATE CHANGE is fast becoming one of the major global issues of our time. Only a few years ago, a serious number of scientists weren't convinced that it was real, or that humans were causing it, or that we could do anything about it (or some combination of the above). Today, for the overwhelming majority of climate scientists, the issue is settled.

Humans, chiefly by burning fossil fuels, are increasing the concentration of heat-trapping gases in our atmosphere, the biosphere's temperature is rising, and the consequences are highly likely to be profoundly disruptive of the life systems that human societies depend on.

Billions of dollars are now being thrown at non-fossil fuel electricity generation technologies, the trading of carbon credits is becoming a massive industry, and Tony Blair is looking to save his shredded reputation by getting George W – one of the last prominent climate-change denialists left in the Western democracies – to finally admit that it needs to be taken seriously.

Of course, to many South Africans climate change isn't even on the radar. Eskom is blithely planning a massive increase in coal-fired power stations to add to their new, screamingly inefficient, open-cycle gas turbines, while promising bargain-basement electricity to foreign aluminium firms. The only politician who seems to know what "climate change" means is Kortbroek, artlessly potted in the ground-floor window-box that is the Department of Environment and Tourism.

Even so, it's a rectum-tighteningly courageous, or pitifully stupid, person who steps up on the debating podium, looks directly into the unidirectional storm of thousands of scientists and peer-reviewed journal papers, to tell the world that climate change isn't worth worrying about.

Nonetheless, here he is. Let us welcome, ladies and gents – Will Alexander, Professor Emeritus (i.e. retired) of the Department of Civil and Biosystems Engineering of the University of Pretoria.

For about a year now, numerous emails written by Alexander and forwarded via a wide variety of sources (including the management team of the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor) have trickled into our inbox. Web searches reveal articles outlining his anti-"climate change alarmist" position in various local and international publications, from *Business Day* to the *Taipei Times*.

Alexander's stance, in essence, is that though global warming is real, it is neither caused by humans nor any danger to life on Earth. Although the atmosphere is getting warmer, and weather patterns are

changing, this is in fact due to "synchronous changes in solar activity". What really matters, he claims, is rainfall, and as, under various global warming scenarios, rainfall is likely to increase, global warming is not a problem. Temperature, he tells us, is a component of climate, but not an important component.

After duly scrutinising Alexander's theories, a nose-Arker emailed him a couple of questions. What exactly, he was asked, are "synchronous changes in solar activity", and how do such changes drive climate change?

Alexander responded by citing a book by a South African forester (D E Hutchins), published in 1889, showing linkages between sunspot numbers and rainfall over an

11-year cycle. In minimum sunspot years in the three cycles he identified between 1842 and 1875, rainfall at the Royal Observatory

in Cape Town was lowest, and in maximum sunspot years, highest.

Alexander claims that his own research has "confirmed" that an unequivocal linkage exists between rainfall and sunspot numbers. Given that atmospheric temperatures do not increase and decrease according to sunspot cycles, Alexander concludes that there is "as yet, no direct linkage between global temperatures and solar activity", and also "no direct linkage between climate and global temperatures despite claims to the contrary by climatologists". In other words, rainfall is determined by the number of sunspots in any given year, not the atmospheric temperature.

The good Prof goes on to say that, because human beings can live anywhere as long as they have water, rainfall is really the only variable worth considering.

We shouldn't get excited about the atmosphere warming, he says, because a hot atmosphere doesn't mean less rain (and anyhow, extrapolating from the last few decades-worth of rainfall data, rainfall is increasing over much of Africa). The temperature increase that the "alarmists" predict, he says, will be insignificant, and "of the same order as the difference in climate between Johannesburg and Pretoria North".

Which is where the already wobbly wheels of Prof Alexander's one-man-band wagon fall off.

As any gardener, or student of plant physiology, well knows, plants are affected by



many more factors than just rainfall. For example, the amount of sun a plant gets can determine whether it lives or dies, whether it flowers and sets seed or not. The ordinary gardener knows this because certain corners of the garden – scientists call them microclimates – are just right for certain plants, others not.

Plants may not hurry around hunting their food, and don't have nervous systems linked to complex brains, but they do have extraordinarily sophisticated hormonal systems linked to special sensory widgets in their cells. Plants react to minute changes in climatic factors by shutting off or activating biochemical systems; factors like humidity, wind, light intensity (even light colour) – and yes, temperature.

If you heat plants just one degree more than their particular life chemistry can take, you kill them – just as people die when their blood temperature goes one degree too high. Apple trees, for example, need a certain number of hours below certain temperatures during the winter in order to grow well in the summer – if a winter isn't cold enough, the crop will fail. Other fruit crops will fail if they have a single night at a single degree below zero. Temperature, as scientists say, has important "threshold effects".

The difference in climate between Pretoria North and Johannesburg – which Alexander considers trivial – means the massive ecological difference between a treeless grassland (Johannesburg, before the gold miners arrived) and a pretty lush, tree-rich bushveld habitat (Pretoria North, before it got built on by old, apartheid-government golden-handshakers). The links between temperature and plant well-being have been well known for a very long time.

Temperature is one of the most important factors determining where which plants grow and reproduce, and where we can grow which crops. Simply stated: even the smallest changes in atmospheric temperatures can have major repercussions in natural ecosystems and our agricultural systems.

Prof Alexander consistently poooh-pooohs the idea that predicted global atmospheric temperature increases of between 1.4 and 5.8 degrees Celsius over the next 100 years (the 2001 estimate of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) will have discernible or significant effects.

This despite the efforts of local scientists who have pointed out to him that the difference between now and the last big Ice Age – when ice sheets several

kilometres thick covered most of Europe and North America – was only five to seven degrees Celsius.

When *noseweek* questioned him on his contention that temperature is unimportant, Alexander was brief and to the point: "The average global temperature increase during the next 100 years will be less than that between breakfast and morning tea on a sunny day. It cannot have the effects you suggest".

When asked to provide a proper argument – with evidence that temperature is biologically unimportant – Prof Alexander failed to answer.

Maybe one could approach the issue by a different tack? "Temperature does not feature in hydrological analyses,"

prediction model" to the world. His mathematical model, he says, has been "tested and verified" and gives "statistically-significant" predictions of climate. Climate, to Prof Alexander, remains rainfall and river flow – temperature is still not part of climate in his world.

He maintains this wilful ignorance while lambasting climate-change scientists, accusing them of having failed to predict climate and so on. Which would be strange news to thousands of serious research scientists all over the world.

What drives a retired prof of civil engineering, with an apparently glittering career in dam-building behind him, to carry on well into his sunset years, unpaid, on a mission beyond his field of

The only politician who seems to know what 'climate change' means is Kortbroek, artlessly potted in the ground-floor window-box that is the Department of the Environment



Be happy: Professor Will Alexander

the Prof recently wrote in the *Taipei Times*. "Temperature is a measurement – not a property" he thundered grandly. Of course – and it's a measurement, as the Prof admits, of heat energy. And heat energy is why we wear oven gloves when handling a hot baking tray. The Prof seems not to be able to hear.

In the latest edition of *The Water Wheel*, a magazine published by the Water Research Commission (the people who study water to make sure South Africans will have enough of it in the future), in a well-illustrated 3-pager, our Prof announces the "Alexander climate

expertise that brings him into endless conflict with mainstream science? Why does he so doggedly refuse to re-examine his views in the face of clear and compelling criticism?

We can only guess, but if he can't keep up with the modern world and the complex computer modelling that climate scientists use nowadays, perhaps he needs to ignore temperature and other inconvenient variables he cannot deal with.

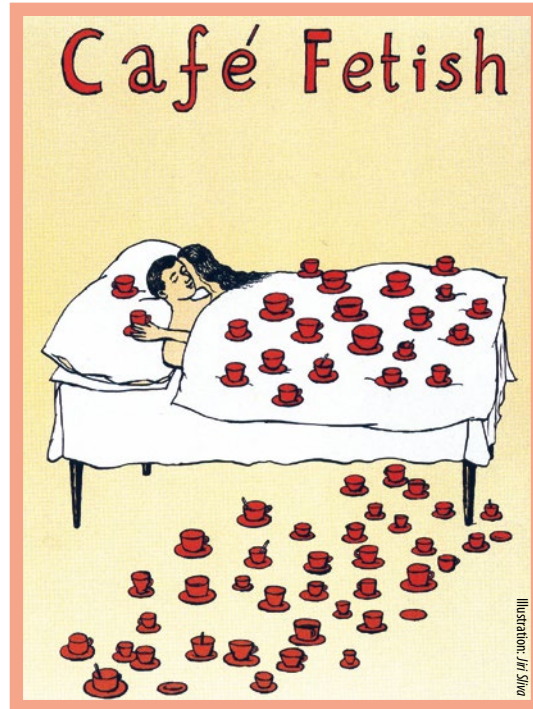
Why concern oneself with such a pathetic figure? Because, the Internet being what it is, Prof Alexander kicks well beyond his shoe size. His emails are forwarded and re-forwarded around the world, to thousands of people. Alexander recently published an article in the Kenyan press attempting to discredit climate science in the eyes of Africans during a crucial phase of the recent Nairobi climate negotiations.

The importance of the issue demands that he be exposed for what he is – inadequate to the task he has set himself, and dangerously irresponsible. What matters today is that we take responsible, sensible – and, dare we say it, moral – steps to prevent our planet becoming unliveable.

That means listening to the warnings of thousands of scientists from the world's major academies of science, not legacy-seeking has-beens with a disregard for basic facts. **■**



Hooked



**I innocently
resolved to
learn more
about another
addictive
drink**

Gauguin

*If you
want
purpose
in the
universe,
ou maat,
comrade,
you've got
to make it*

ALL RIGHT, YOU LOT. Everybody out there know about Gauguin, then? I mean anybody NOT know about Gauguin?

When I was but a wee lad

Gauguin was hard on my heels. Chronologically speaking, that is. I mean he had no sooner departed this life, give a decade or two, when I arrived in it all eager for everything, and his paintings were out there waiting, waiting. For me.

And now, blow me down, suddenly I realise he has become an Old Master, you know, along with Rembrandt and Michelangelo and that lot, I mean he's been gone a hundred years. Makes me feel a bit of an old master myself, know what I mean? I don't have to apologise for trying to seem knowledgeable, because he's my old buddy, in a manner of speaking.

Until quite recently I had another old buddy, name of Issy Eaglestone, and whenever Issy was engaged in conversation, or debate, or argument, he would preface every opinion with: Of course what Lenin said was.....(such and such). This meant that discussion could now proceed from certain ineluctable truths, and my family have pointed out quite recently that that's exactly what I do with Gauguin. Well, ja. I do. Except what Gauguin always said was that there is no ineluctable truth, only the question: what is ineluctable truth? So discussion can now proceed without anybody trying to tell you what Life, I mean your existence, is all about, thank you, and said discussion from now on will be all questions. If you want purpose in the universe, ou maat, comrade, you've got to make it yourself.

Those who teach one about Gauguin get him all wrong. They tell you his are gracious simple happy and beautiful people, with baskets of luscious fruit on some some Pacific island so idyllic it scarce bears looking at. It never gets ripped up by hurricanes and there are no slums and nobody goes mad of syphilis and dies and the governor is a really nice old French papa who's brought all these delights to the populace along with Jesus and many bales of the bright cotton prints Gauguin's people so favour. Well, when these silent people lay that level gaze on you, what does it mean? Nobody is ever smiling, nobody's lips are ever parted as if in speech. Indeed nobody moves. Even the man on the horse in the surf is motionless. They are all waiting for you to tell them what they are doing here.

The Tahitian beach for Gauguin was a stage, almost a fantasy stage, on which he places his stately, symbolic actors. In one picture he actually writes in the questions, just in case you didn't catch them from the painting: Where do we come from? Where are we going? What are we doing here? Something like that, all questions.

Gauguin always said: Never finish a painting. If you've made your point and there's something more to say, say it in the next painting. And the reason why he said this daft thing was that there has to remain some closure of the form, also closure of the statement, and that closure is what the viewer has to do. That's how he latches the viewer into the creative process. That's what your favourite great Greats of the Italian High Renaissance never could allow. The great wriggling spaghetti church painters told you all right what you were doing here, and where you were going if you weren't obedient and you didn't watch out. Hell, talk about propagandist political art? Stalinist official painting? They explained everything, all you had to do was admire. Any questions? Questions! Nyet!

Well, I was recently, day of I'm along full

quite taken aback just on 1st December, first the shad season and smugly strolling home the beach with my licensed five of nice breakfast-size fish when there before me I see this young Zulu woman with a baseball cap back-to-front on her head and a cardboard Castle Beer tray full of avoes in her hands, for sale, and I feel absolutely sure I'd met her before somewhere so I stop before her and sort of smile a bit but not quite and she almost does but not quite. And I have met her before.

Come to think of it, we've got all the stage props here in Durbs; the flat golden beach and the right trees too: Pandanus, Casuarina, mango, plantain. Come to think of it, she IS a Gauguin woman, well, would be if she took off her jeans and stuff and draped herself under the armpits with a nice bright length of floral cloth. Come to

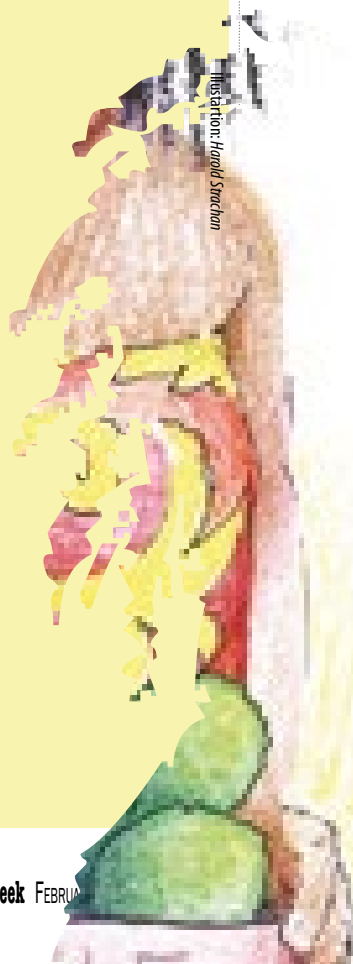


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PERSONAL

Lorna I love you – Brian.

Greetings to all our friends – Fred and Grace Knights.

Happy 30th Kaz. May you have a prosperous year. Patience is a virtue. Love forever.

Vivienne thank you for coming into my life – Alastair.

Gabriella, you are as beautiful as your name. Be in touch – R Fisch, Sea Point.

Nixon fell for lying, not for the break-in. – I Pringle, Bishopscourt.

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To all the men in my life "Happy Valentine's Day!" – lots of love Nicci

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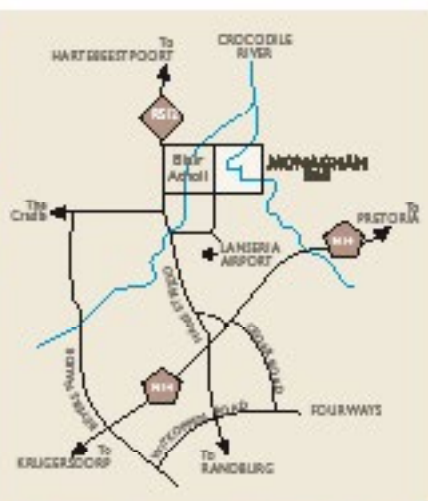
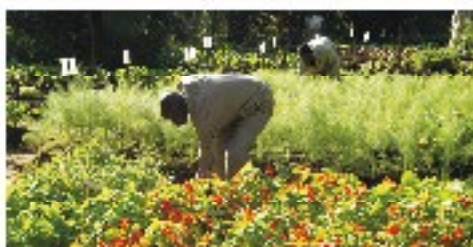
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