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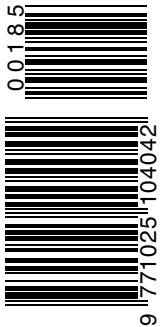
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Letters

If truth be told

RE YOUR ARTICLE ON CHILDREN GROWING up without parental supervision and your debunking of the *Sunday Times's* Cato Manor exposé (both in *nose184*):

The large number of children in South Africa is a huge problem and challenge. But these children per se are not the problem, the problem lies with the irresponsible parents (some as young as 15 years; most, unemployed) who produce these children and then turn to the state to receive a monthly grant for each child born. Somebody in government should have the guts to deal with the problem. The sooner the grant policy is reviewed, the better it will be – for the children and for the country as a whole.

I suggest the government increases the monthly grant to R1,000 per child for a maximum of two children per mother, and zero grant for any additional child.

A responsible government cannot afford to encourage people via the existing grant scheme to have children and then not have the resources to care for them.

In your article about the *Sunday Times* and Cato Manor, you ask: Does anybody tell the truth anymore? and Who is telling the truth? My simple advice: trust nobody!

Marius Kritzinger
Somerset West

Media Independence

AS OUR SOURCES OF INFORMATION SUCH as the SABC, Independent Newspapers (what a misnomer) and e-Tv rapidly become more politicised, *Noseweek* becomes that much more valuable as a credible news source and slayer of dragons!

Tony Lavine
Craighall, Johannesburg

■ IQBAL SURVE'S NEW EDITOR OF THE *Cape Times* wouldn't publish this letter, so please will you?

"The wonderful family of *Drum*" was heralded on the front page of the

Cape Times; and on an inside page, the article referred to the heady days of the "Drum family" and its island of freedom in apartheid South Africa.

As a member of the family that owned *Drum* (and before that *The Cape Times*), I take offence. I find it hypocritical, because very sadly the *Cape Times* is no longer an independent free voice and bastion of fine journalism.

My father Jim Bailey spent his lifetime and personal fortune realising a free press across post-colonial Africa, educating, bringing enlightenment, debate and above all exposing injustices. The *Cape Times*, along with the *Rand Daily Mail*, played its very important role against so many odds, exposing the murder of Steve Biko and other atrocities of apartheid.

When he was forced by financial pressure to sell *Drum* to Naspers, they honoured the agreement not to interfere in editorial content.

Sadly that no longer applies to the *Cape Times*, now purged of great, educated free-thinking journalists.

The resignation of columnist Max du Preez over the newspaper's defence of our corrupt president is the last straw.

I will no longer renew my [*Cape Times*] subscription and this will be the last of many letters of mine that you have been so kind as to publish.

Goodbye *ANC Times*.

Beezy Bailey
Cape Town

Swearing by Pauw

MAY I THANK JACQUES PAUW FOR ALL HE went through to get us the news. We were able to participate in events well beyond our ken because of the skill and bravery of Pauw and others like him.

Personally, I'm not surprised he needs a complete break. I wish him well with his new adventure in Riebeeck Kasteel.

Pam Herr
Sun Valley

■ READING YOUR PROFILE OF JACQUES Pauw, I could not help feeling he could express himself better without all the swearing; otherwise the article was very good and we will be going to his restaurant soon.

Les Lategan
Constantia

Pay back that prize money

JACOB ZUMA IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO should pay back money. The *Sunday Times* "investigative unit" is a disgrace to South African journalism. In December 2011, their headline screamed: "Shoot to kill: inside a SA police death squad". It became known as the so-called Cato Manor death squad story. They exposed a bunch of gun-toting cops that mowed down whatever came in their sights. A very respected policeman, Gen Johan Booysen, was arrested, charged and suspended.

The journalist trio of Rob Rose, Stephan Hofstatter and Mzilikazi wa Afrika won the Taco Kuiper Award and R200,000 for this story. It has emerged that they not just got the story wrong, but acted maliciously in fingering Booysen and his men.

Sunday Times legal editor Susan Smuts recently said that if the newspaper was "played", they were not the only ones. As though that's an excuse.

Noseweek has for months [years] written about the *Times's* bungling in reporting the story. What are the respected Taco Kuiper judges going to do about the reward they (wrongly) bestowed on the *Sunday Times*?

Don't expect the three journalists to admit wrongdoing. They have





Eye-watering... Swearing by Pauw

shown over the past two years (Cato Manor, Zimbabwe renditions, SARS spy story) that they are being politically manipulated and have little integrity.

Jacques Pauw
Via FaceBook

■ INFURIATING TO SEE HOW *SUNDAY TIMES* investigative journalist Mzilikazi wa Afrika resorted to name-calling and basically running away when asked to explain himself (at the book launch hosted by Charles King). The *Sunday Times* must pay back the prize money.

Hazel Woodward
Cape Town

■ I AM STAYING OUT OF THIS MUCKRAKING affair between the *Sunday Times* and *Noseweek* – the reason I declined to comment or get involved in studying court papers that *Noseweek* offered to share. I suggest those interested in the Bongani Mkhize case check on the outcome of the civil case and why Judge Gregory Kruger ordered the police to pay damages to his family. My reading of it all is that the man was executed.

Fred Kockott
Via FaceBook

If you'd read our documents you might not have been so glib in your reply. The State strategically withdrew its defence against the widow Mkhize's damages claim, as it amounted to an admission that the State's criminal charges against Booyesen were unfounded, exposing the new police leadership to more ridicule and opening the way to a much, much larger damages claim from Booyesen and other defamed policemen. – Editor.

Perhaps civil society should rule

AT WHAT POINT DOES THIS INSTITUTIONAL corruption involving police, politicians and prosecutors reach a critical mass leading to the absolute failure of the state? Should civil society prepare to take over management of South Africa?

Chris Corns
Winsford, UK

Joint effort to push pipe dream

REGARDING BHEKI MASHILE'S WISH TO GROW marijuana on his farm, a brave bunch of citizens have summonsed various government departments either to explain and justify current legislation or bin it. The matter is being heard in the Western Cape High Court in March. If Bheki is quick he can probably join the action. Costs would be minimal since Jeremy Acton of the Dagga Party is providing free admin and legal support.

Steve Pain
Riversdale

Fuel from styrofoam

RE THE STYROFOAM ARTICLE (*NOSE184*) and the enduring threat it poses to the environment.

A possible solution: in Ireland a company is turning plastic waste, including styrofoam into high grade diesel. See: <http://www.inspirationgreen.com/plastic-waste-as-fuel.html>

D P Kramer
Killarney

Nedbank clients to sue

THANK YOU FOR PUBLISHING MY LETTER about the theft of funds from my Nedbank account (*nose181*) and the similar one from Dr Frans Lues (*nose183*). As a result of the publicity, we have heard from a number of others who have had similar experiences. We are now jointly going to take action against the bank.

Barbara Fisher
Cape Town

What of SIU's Khasu probe?

IN 2010 THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATING UNIT had begun focusing on a building contractor, Khotso Frank Khasu, over a contract with the Naledi Municipality in the North West for the building of 3,000 low-cost houses in Vryburg. The SIU found that only four houses were built and that Khasu Engineering Services, which Khasu owns, had billed the council for millions of rands for earthworks, roads, stormwater structures, streetlights etc that were never built.

There was no tender process, and, between 2008 and 2009, the council paid R27m to Khasu Engineering and another R58m to Khasu's personal accounts – a total of R85m.

Khasu was subsequently appointed Chief Director of Traditional Affairs and Cooperative Governance on a minimum salary of R930,000. Until recently there was no prosecution or asset freeze and no money paid back, to my knowledge.

Is there any update on this matter?

Edward Dale
Pretoria



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Children without parents

NICE THAT YOU PROFILED CHILDREN (nose185). But I must draw your attention to a couple of factual inaccuracies, and a slightly misplaced emphasis.

- “Of South Africa’s 18.5 million children under the age of 18, 21% are orphans, 25% do not live with their parents and 60% live in poverty.” I presume these figures are taken from “Children Count”, which has selected indicators published at the back of the *SA Child Gauge*.

- “21% are orphans”: this figure (it should be 19%) could easily be misleading, as in popular discourse an orphan is a child whose parents have both died, whereas our definition of “orphanhood” includes children who have lost one parent. The figure for “double orphans” is 3.3%. The main form of orphaning is paternal orphaning (11%). 92% of children have living mothers. This is not to say that orphaning is not a problem.

- “25% do not live with their parents”:

Unqualified, this statement might lead the ignorant reader to imagine abandoned and delinquent children roaming the streets, etc. Our recent analyses of household survey data show that children who are not living with their biological parents are overwhelmingly in the care of other kin – grandmothers, aunts, etc. These care arrangements are rooted in historic patterns of migrant labour and urban housing shortages: not something that poor households can easily resolve. This does not preclude the important conclusions reached by the two experts your reporter interviewed.

- “80% of South Africa’s children live in informal settlements.” According to the General Household Survey, the estimated figure is 8%.”

Katharine Hall

Children’s Institute, UCT

Thank you for pointing out the errors of fact and perception in our report. As you point out, in common usage “orphan” de-

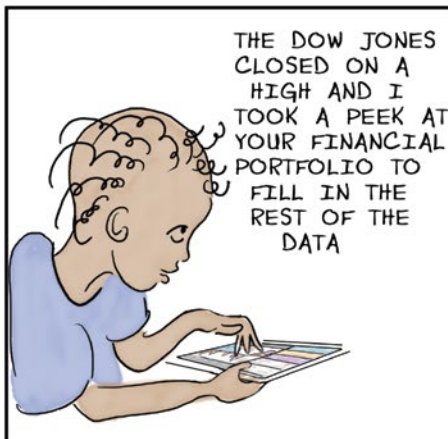
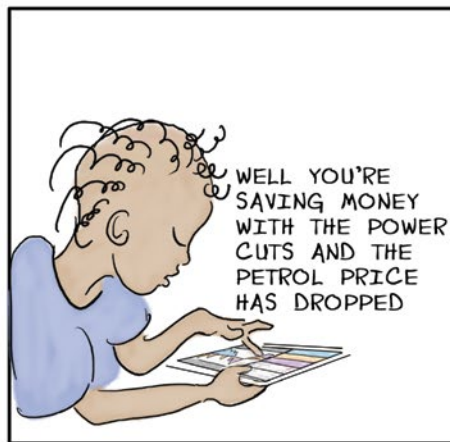
scribes a child, whose parents have both died. The survey’s use of the rare wider definition to include children who have lost one parent is what served to possibly “sensationalise” the total figure arrived at. And, despite all the mitigating factors you mention, the loss of parents remains a serious factor that places children at a disadvantage and at risk.

The same can be said of the huge number of children not living with a parent. The latter figure remains an indicator of serious social dislocation that needs to be addressed as a national priority, no matter its causes.

The 80% instead of 8% for children growing up in informal settlements was an undetected typing error, but then 8% is itself suspect, given the proliferation of shack neighbourhoods. In any event it did not affect the main focus of the story: the vast number of children growing up without parental supervision.

These errors have been corrected in our online archive. – Ed.

Stent



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From Russia with love?

IT TOOK JUST THREE HAPPY SESSIONS WITH Vladimir Putin – no doubt exchanging anecdotes about their youthful days in the spy business and how handy they both still find their spook connections in advancing their careers – for Jacob Zuma to forget about the South African Constitution and get his dumb but still quite sexy lackey Tina Joemat-Pettersson to sign South Africa up for a (sort-of secret) trillion-dollar nuclear deal.

May we remind him: Section 217 of the Constitution requires an organ of state to contract for goods and services “in accordance with a system which is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective”.

The third President of a newly liberated South Africa also appears to have forgotten that for centuries Russia has been and continues to be a pretty ruthless, corrupt, imperial power that takes large profits but no crap from its vassal states. Those that don’t deliver get killed.

The vodka obviously did the trick. In negotiations with Russia, South Africa is at a grave disadvantage; the capacity to manage such negotiations in a hard-nosed way is not there. Zuma and his ministers are out of their depth. (Joemat-Pettersson is the Minister of Energy and signed the contact... puhleeez!) Frighteningly, the capacity to manage a fleet of new-technology nuclear power stations – and maintain it for the next 40 years – is not there.

(Forget Eskom; for a decade we have found it impossible even to manage and maintain a single laboratory that measures the alcohol content of blood samples needed to convict drunken drivers.)

If the Russians are to supply as well as manage and maintain our proposed new

fleet of nuclear power stations, what’s that going to cost? (In the arms deal, South Africa notoriously omitted to establish the ongoing operating costs of the fancy equipment they bought at fancy prices, so the navy has lovely ships but no budget for diesel to run them, and the air force has a whole lot of planes in storage which they’re hoping to sell.)

The crunch question: where will the money come from? South Africa has neither the cash on hand, nor the creditworthiness to borrow it. Eskom’s income could, in any event, never service the debt.

Russia, too, has neither cash on hand, nor creditworthiness to be able to finance the deal. It has had to cancel or stall the construction of several of its own nuclear power stations because it can no longer afford them. It’s blown all its reserves on the war with Ukraine and on propping up the rouble in the face of international boycotts. Meanwhile the price of oil and gas (its primary exports) has plummeted. Its financial prospects are looking so dire that its corrupt community of oligarchs have thought it prudent over the past two months to shift US\$358 billion into Swiss bank accounts.

So where *is* the money going to come from? Some disturbing clues emerged at the recent mining indaba in Cape Town, where there was talk about creating a sort of sovereign fund or “national champion”, which is somehow related to the powers of the minerals minister to declare any mineral a strategic resource and then appropriate a certain amount of it from the producer, at well below market price. It’s beginning to sound like a more serious version of spaza shop looting. But more about that later.

In the meantime, see page 9.

Class action

LAST MONTH THE *NEW YORK TIMES* reported that banks in Russia, Japan, the US, and Europe have fallen victim to a massive, sophisticated malware hack, with upwards of \$300 million stolen in the process. No banks have, however, come forward to acknowledge the theft.

Local banks have promoted online and cellphone banking, without regard to the security risks. They now face an unimaginable wave of cyber fraud.

They are anxious that their customers should not know the extent of the risk and hold the banks liable for having embraced new technology without proper caution.

Ask all those Nedbank clients who have

discovered their bank balances mysteriously shrinking overnight. The banks appear to show no interest in establishing who the thieves are, or in any event are in no hurry to do so. (In case they’re in-house?) They determinedly deny their victim customers access to any relevant information and then simply insist that “it’s your fault – and your loss”.

Nedbank now faces a class action brought by several of these unfortunate clients – thanks to the information they were able to gather from *Noseweek* reports and letters. If you, too, are a victim and haven’t yet joined them, do so. It’s about time some of these issues were thrashed out in the open.

The Editor

Cato Manor revisited

THE *SUNDAY TIMES* HAS CONTESTED *Noseweek's* detailed criticism of their original story in which they claimed to have found evidence that the SAPS serious and violent crimes unit based at Cato Manor operated as a "death squad" for hire. In doing so they also launched a personal attack on one of *Noseweek's* reporters.

In the meantime *Noseweek* has gathered still more detailed evidence which casts further doubt on the veracity of the *Sunday Times* story. Here is a condensed version of a longer account of events, available on *Noseweek's* website.

Dec 2008: Members of the Cato Manor violent crimes unit shoot dead taxi bosses and alleged murderers Magojela Ndimande and Sithembiso Tembe while trying to arrest them.

Early 2009: Durban Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) officer Shamila Williams informs her colleagues that she has located eye witnesses to the shooting of Ndimande.

Feb 2009: Taxi boss and multiple murder suspect Bongani Mkhize is shot dead by SAPS's National Intervention Unit. Williams attends the crime scene.

May 2009: A colonel from the Hawks approaches *Noseweek* reporter Paul Kirk with claims that Mkhize was murdered. The Hawks colonel, who asks not to be identified, claims his contact at the Independent Police Investigative Directorate plans to charge Cato Manor cops with Mkhize's murder and claims that Maj Gen Johan Booyesen and members of the Cato Manor unit are in the pay of Mkhize's taxi rivals (*nose184*).

26 Nov 2009: Cato Manor cops shoot dead suspected bank robber Prince Thabede, who has been charged with murder and is out on bail.

3 Dec 2009: Shamila Williams tells colleagues she has a statement from Thabede's girlfriend Denise Hurley, which says that he was murdered by policemen who she has named, and who planted a gun on him after his death.

The Hawks colonel offers to introduce Kirk to Williams, his friend from the IPID who, he claims, also has proof that Ndimande and Tembe were murdered.

The introduction never takes place.

Mid 2010: *Sunday Times* journalist Mzilikazi wa Afrika contacts Kirk to say he is "investigating Johan Booyesen". Kirk suggests that Wa Afrika contacts the colonel, as some of the alleged crimes that the colonel mentions have taken place in Gauteng, where Wa Afrika is based.

Kirk makes inquiries into the colonel's claims of "massive corruption" in the Cato Manor unit. Kirk begins to have doubts when he learns the colonel once claimed in court that he took a witness statement from a parrot.

Sept 2010: A gang suspected of a spate of violent robberies at casinos is arrested by Cato Manor police and charged with robbing the Sibiya Casino. The gang is led by Malvern (aka Melvin) Ndlovu. Prosecutor Yuri Gangai tells the court the accused are all wanted on 30 to 40 cases of armed robbery, including a number of cases where policemen were attacked with "military weapons of war". Ndlovu alone has had several warrants for his arrest issued between 2007 and 2008 – all for bank robbery.

Late 2010: It becomes evident most of the colonel's claims are hype and invention: Kirk interviews Mkhize's rival taxi bosses who insist Booyesen's men were not in their pay. The Stanger Taxi Association, like Mkhize's, claim Booyesen's cops unfairly target them for arrest.

Early 2011: Williams allegedly tells IPID colleagues that the Ndimande murder witnesses need witness protection.

Sept 2011: At a bail hearing Colonel Brian Padayachee says phone intercepts had revealed that Kirk's informant, the colonel, had been conspiring with police admin officer Navin Madhoe and businessman Thoshan Panday – who were suspects in a serious fraud and police corruption investigation led by Booyesen.

Padayachee publicly identifies Kirk's now-discredited source as Colonel Rajen Ayer and reveals that: "on 19th August 2011 Ayer was recorded telling the main suspect, Panday, that he can help him with his case".

23 Oct 2011: The *Sunday Times* investigations team runs a story claiming that Hawks boss Anwar Dramat was

part of a programme to kidnap and repatriate Zimbabwean crime suspects.

Dec 2011: The *Sunday Times* reports they have uncovered a "death squad" run by Booyesen and his men and quotes eye-witnesses whom they claim to have interviewed who say they saw Ndimande and his bodyguard being murdered and guns being planted on them.

Following the *Sunday Times* exposé, the Cato Manor unit is closed down. Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa says this was necessary because of the stigma of the negative media reports.

Jan 2012: Shamila Williams tells her colleagues she has affidavits from the witnesses to Ndimande's murder. Sources in IPID tell *Noseweek* they were relieved to see the *Sunday Times* article as some had begun to suspect Williams had invented the Ndimande witnesses.

22 Mar 2012: More than two years after Williams claimed to have taken a statement from Hurley, Prince Thabede's partner, a senior IPID investigator based in Gauteng calls to take a "second" statement from her. IPID had apparently become suspicious of Williams's extraordinary ability to produce witnesses "out of thin air" and have them provide "absolutely amazing affidavits, which implicated the same two or three policemen every time".

Mar-Oct 2012: IPID management asks Williams for copies of her claimed affidavits relating to Ndimande and Tembe's alleged murders. Failing that, she is asked to hand over their contact details and names. The witnesses that the *Sunday Times* alleged to have interviewed appear to be the same witnesses Williams claimed to have interviewed.

Oct 2012: Prosecutor Yuri Gangai withdraws the confessions of Malvern Ndlovu and his co-accused casino robbers. Gangai tells the court he believes the confessions were obtained by torture, since the investigating officers are part of the same notorious Cato Manor unit exposed by the *Sunday Times*.

Jan 2013: Ndlovu and his co-accused are released from prison when the case against them collapses. Prison authorities appear to have been unaware that Ndlovu and his gang are also wanted in

numerous other provinces for murder and robbery, and are also in the country illegally. Within 48 hours a series of robberies takes place at casinos in Gauteng.

Since then numerous other armed robberies with identical modus operandi have taken place. Cato Manor cops say their attempts to warn their Gauteng counterparts about Ndlovu led to some of them being threatened with arrest for interfering in police investigations.

Late 2013: *Noseweek* discovers that the affidavit Shamila Williams allegedly took from Hurley in 2009 carries the wrong initials on each page. Contacted by *Noseweek*, Hurley denies having deposed to the affidavit. She was never able to identify particular suspects, nor had she seen a gun being planted next to her partner's body (as in the statement Williams claimed earlier to have taken from Hurley). Hurley tells *Noseweek* the only statement she made was given three years after the event to senior IPID investigator Molatedi Molatedi from Gauteng.

Oct 2013: *Sunday Times* wins Global Shining Light award in Brazil for expo-

sure of the Cato Manor death squad.

Oct 2013: The *Sunday Times* again reports on Dramat's rendition of Zimbabwean suspects. It claims to have seen documents that prove Dramat was implicated in the kidnap and murder scheme.

Mid 2014: An expert questions document-examiner reports that the signature on the affidavit that Williams took from Hurley does not match other examples of Hurley's signature.

Oct 2014: A senior Cato Manor cop tells *Noseweek* an informer has contacted him several times with credible information on who murdered South African football legend Senzo Meyiwa on 26 October. The officer says he has done nothing with the information for fear of having his bail revoked for interfering with an investigation. The informer alleged the killers were two professional hitmen, one of whom lives in Durban.

Late 2014: Williams is called to a disciplinary hearing on numerous charges. Among them, that she forged internal IPID memos to allow her to take IPID cars home and that she invented claims

that she had witnesses who saw Ndimande and Tembe being murdered.

These appear to be the same witnesses the *Sunday Times* interviewed.

Williams resigns, and her resignation is accepted. All attempts to contact her fail.

24 Dec 2014: Anwar Dramat is suspended over allegations that he was part of the illegal rendition scheme involving Zimbabwean suspects that the *Sunday Times* reported on in 2011 and 2013.

Jan 2015: A gang of armed men wearing overalls and carrying sledgehammers robs the Blue Route Mall in Tokai, Cape Town. Cato Manor police officers tell *Noseweek* the modus operandi used by this gang is the same as Ndlovu's gang, which also favours overalls and whose members were released following the *Sunday Times* exposé.

Feb 2015: IPID head Robert McBride, who is familiar with the docket, reveals that it contains no proof of Dramat's alleged involvement in the illegal rendition of Zimbabwean suspects. McBride trashes the *Sunday Times's* reporting. ■

Could South Africa run on batteries?

REVOLUTIONARY NEW STORAGE batteries for domestic sun panels and wind turbines could transform South Africa's power grid within a decade.

They could do to Eskom what cell-phones have done to Telkom, and the internet has done to the post office – radically reduce demand for the services they provide.

Last month Elon Musk – best known in the United States for his Tesla electric car – announced that in the next few months he'd be producing a stationary battery for powering the home.

SolarCity, a company chaired by South African-born Musk, installs solar panels on US customers' roofs, leases them for less than they'd be paying in energy bills, and sells surplus energy back to the local utility. It's proved a tremendously successful model. Founded in 2006, the company now has 168,000 customers and controls 39% of the rapidly expanding residential solar market in the US.

But the sun isn't always shining when you need power, and sometimes the sun

is shining when you don't need power. When there's a lot of solar in the system, it can get hard to keep the grid balanced. The Tesla battery, using technology developed to power America's first production electric car, is proving to be the answer.

As states and cities adopt intermittent renewables like solar and wind, they need to install energy storage too, providing a ready and waiting market for Tesla's batteries.

SolarCity is building a "giga" photovoltaic panel factory in Nevada. There are plans for every SolarCity unit to come with battery storage and for the system to supply power at a lower cost than natural gas. Tesla spokesman JB Straubel believes that the market for stationary batteries "can grow faster than for vehicles". A full 30% of the gigafactory will be dedicated to their manufacture.

The prospect of cheap solar panels combined with powerful batteries is already a source of significant anxiety in the conventional energy sector. In 2013, the Edison Electric Institute, the trade group

for investor-owned electricity companies, warned in a report: "One can imagine a day when battery storage technology or micro turbines could allow customers to be electric-grid independent." It likened the speed of the coming transition to the switch from landlines to cellphones 10 years ago. People may just unplug from the grid altogether – or more likely, install systems that let them rely on it only rarely – prompting what those in the industry call "the utility death spiral".

Experts believe utilities like Eskom are not doomed, but may have to undergo a radical transformation, becoming something closer to minders of an increasingly distributed grid, rather than the centralised power producers they are today.

Maybe Eskom and the government should take note, and start taking their solar and wind energy programmes a lot more seriously, or they could end up looking like third world fools landed with a fleet of crippling expensive nuclear power plants that we don't have the skills to operate – and which were obsolete before they arrived. ■



Gates Foundation money squandered reinventing fruit for 'ungrateful' Africans. By Hilary Venables

MIGHT MICROSOFT BILLIONAIRES Bill and Melinda Gates's plan to feed starving African children with high-tech superfoods have slipped on a banana? Nutritional tests on their first viable effort, a banana enriched with pro-vitamin A, have been postponed, with awkward questions being raised about the true purpose of the project.

Last November, the world's first genetically bio-fortified banana, developed at an Australian university at the expense of the Gates Foundation, was due to be fed to young student volunteers at Iowa State University in the US.

Although the only creature previously exposed to the banana was a Mongolian gerbil and no safety testing had been done, 12 eager young things signed up in return for \$900 each.

But before the human guinea pigs (or gerbils) could earn their wage, the test was abandoned. The explanation, according to the man who masterminded the super banana, Professor James Dale of the Queensland University of Technology, the fruit doesn't travel well.

Since bananas are routinely shipped all over the world, and this priceless test sample would presumably be handled with the delicacy usually reserved for human organs, not everyone is convinced.

Questions are also being asked about why Dale couldn't find 12 volunteers from among his own students right there in Brisbane instead of flying the bananas half-way round the planet*.

So, if transportation is not the problem, what is? One possible reason is that just before the tests were due to start,

an international coalition of scientists, farmers' groups, development organisations and environmental activists under the banner of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (Afsa) published an open letter raising concerns about the banana's safety.

Addressed to the Gates Foundation and Iowa State University – and signed by 127 organisations and 26 scientists – the letter, points out that the synthesis of vitamin A in the body is not well-understood. It says that when a plant is modified for nutritional reasons it needs to be subjected to stricter testing than when modified for other purposes like herbicide resistance or drought tolerance.

The letter also says bio-fortified GM crops “divert resources away from more locally appropriate agricultural solutions to nutritional concerns... If indeed the aim of the project is to combat vitamin A deficiency, then surely they should be advocating for the consumption of more diverse fruits and foods – such as sweet potatoes – that are rich in vitamin A and are in abundance in Africa.”

It also questions the relevance to the health and welfare of millions of poor Ugandans of a test involving a dozen wealthy, well-fed American students. It ends with a demand that the letter's contents be brought to the attention of the test subjects.

Noseweek asked the Iowa State University professor in charge of the test, Dr Wendy White, whether that last directive had been followed, but she has not replied. Nor has she answered our questions about the purpose and nature of the study, or why it was called off.

Big Biotech has no record of being intimidated by civil society, the media or sceptical scientists. So it's a stretch to imagine the open letter made much impact.

(The Gates Foundation was asked for their response to the letter, and a reply with an extremely courteous “no comment” was received within hours.)

Anyway, there is a more credible reason why the project may have lost traction. One of the most intriguing features of the super-banana is the source of the gene inserted to produce the beta carotene needed to synthesise vitamin A. It does not come from one of the plants more readily associated with the vitamin – like, say, a sweet potato, carrot or yellow squash. It comes from another banana. To be precise, it's from the Fe'i Asupina banana indigenous to Papua New Guinea, and one of a variety of so-called “red bananas” which are rich in carotenoids and have been grown and enjoyed for thousands of years from south Asia and the Pacific to Central and South America and even Africa.

Which leads to why the Gates Foundation is reinventing the wheel and, more important, who owns the rights to a genetic characteristic selected for generations by the people of Papua New Guinea?

The answer to the first question, according to Dale, is that the people of Uganda eat cooking bananas (plantains) that are less sweet than red bananas.

If that is a problem, why has he chosen to insert the Fe'i Asupina gene into the ubiquitous Cavendish banana, the one we are all familiar with; the long, yellow one usually eaten raw and grown for export to rich industrialised countries?



Professor James Dale with his miracle banana, modified using genes from a ... yes ... banana

It is only fair to say at this point that the Gates Foundation and Dale are also supporting research into a bio-fortified transgenic version of the widely-grown East African green cooking banana or matooke/matoko. The GM matooke was reported to be undergoing field trials in Uganda in 2011, but has not been heard of since. Considering the aim of the project, it is odd that more effort isn't being focused on the Ugandan research.

The British magazine *The Ecologist* says the choice of the Cavendish** for modification throws doubt on Dale's humanitarian claims. An article, published in November, asks: "Could his real intention be to capture a commercial market in selling a premium, novelty 'high nutrient' banana to northern consumers? And in the process, pave the way for other GMO bananas with commercially desirable qualities?"

That would certainly explain why corn-fed young co-eds from the heartland might be a more relevant test cohort than, say, children from the slums of Kampala.

But if *The Ecologist* is right, and Prof Dale does regard his super-bananas as a future cash cow, he will still have to deal with the matter of possible biopiracy charges.

Perhaps even if the poor of Uganda get nothing of value from the Gates Foundation's superfood ambitions, the people of PNG may.

* Although it could have something to do with the fact that Iowa State University is particularly accommodating to

the BioTech industry, which has donated tens of millions of dollars in research funding and has representatives serving on various of its faculty bodies. Between 2006 and 2010 the university's agronomy department took close to half its grant funding (almost \$20 million) from private sector donors including Dow and Monsanto. Representatives from Monsanto, Pioneer Hi-Bred and Syngenta have all served as directors of its plant sciences institute. In 2011, Monsanto established a new faculty chair in soybean breeding within the university's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. It also paid for the Monsanto Student Services Wing.

** What makes the choice of the Cavendish even less explicable is that the cultivar may well be doomed to extinction.

This banana, which accounts for 45% of the world's banana crop and 95% of banana exports, is being attacked by two fungal diseases which are defying all attempts at control and for which a viable GM-resistant variant has yet to be developed. The advance of these diseases is accelerated by the fact that the Cavendish is grown in vast plantations of genetically identical plants so there are no barriers to transmission. GM crops present the same problem. Opponents of GM argue that encouraging the cultivation of a wide variety of existing and hybridised strains is a far better guarantee of food security and improved nutrition than dependence on vulnerable, nutritionally uniform monocultures. ■

Bill Gates' cash often ends up in the hands of big business

PERHAPS IT'S A CASE OF NAIVETY, but nothing Bill and Melinda Gates do in Africa seems to turn out like they said they hoped it would.

Recently, their foundation's Alliance for a Green Africa (Agra) has again come under attack for allowing funds intended to empower small farmers to be diverted to the bank accounts of multinational corporations. (For previous examples, see "Big Agri feeds its own bottom line", *nose182*.)

Three years ago, Agra spent \$25 million (R300m), their biggest grant so far, establishing an organisation called the African Fertiliser and Agribusiness Partnership (Afap), ostensibly to help small farmers become more profitable by making fertiliser accessible and affordable.

But researchers for the African Centre for Biosafety (ACB), have found that almost all the money has gone towards providing credit guarantees to multinational fertiliser companies and to the foreign banks queuing up to get small farmers into debt.

The chief beneficiaries, according to their report*, are Norwegian-based Yara, which dominates the fertiliser market in Africa, the Standard Bank Group, Barclays and the Dutch-owned Rabobank.

Other names that cropped up during the investigation were Louis Dreyfus Commodities (grain traders with reported earnings of \$63.6 billion (R750bn) in 2013); International Raw Materials Ltd (IRM), a US marketer and distributor of fertiliser; and the Cocoa Fertiliser Initiative in Cote d'Ivoire, which includes Cargill, Nestlé, Mars and Barry Callebaut, the world's largest chocolate maker.

No doubt these deserving corporations will find ways to demonstrate their gratitude.

* Downloadable from <http://www.acbio.org.za/images/stories/dmdocuments/acbio-AFAP-report.pdf>

Evidence is slim, says judge ruling against weight-loss products

OVER THE YEARS *NOSEWEEK* HAS reported on the persistent efforts of medical doctor and researcher Harris Steinman to make sure that the weak and vulnerable aren't taken for a ride by snake oil salesmen. Steinman concluded a long time ago that, because of the weak regulatory system in the area of complementary and alternative medicines ("CAMs"), his best bet was the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). Far from perfect of course, but needs must!

The ASA Code of Practice says that an advertiser must be honest, and must not make claims that are misleading. It also says that if an advertisement makes claims that are objectively verifiable, the advertiser must be in possession of documentary evidence that supports those claims, and that documentation must come from someone who is "independent, credible and an expert in the particular field".

So what typically happens in the world of Harris Steinman is that a pedlar of snake oil puts out advertising material that makes enticing claims; Steinman lodges an ASA objection on the basis that the claims are false and misleading; the pedlar responds with the documentary evidence that it says substantiates the claims; and the ASA makes a decision.

Steinman lodges a lot of ASA objections and his win-rate is pretty good.

One of the companies that Steinman tends to bash heads with is called Herbex. He secured a pretty convincing victory against Herbex in late 2014, when the ASA's highest tribunal, the Final Appeal Committee (headed by former Constitutional Court justice, Kate O'Regan), ruled against Herbex in a matter that had been running for quite some time.

Three different Herbex products were involved in this case. The first was Her-

bex Appetite Control Tablets, and the advertising bumph said they're "formulated to manage the appetite safely and naturally", they constitute an "effective weight-loss formula", and using them "manages appetite, reduces hunger pangs and cravings". The second was Herbex Booster Eat-Less Drops, whose "main function is to balance blood sugar levels, reducing hunger pangs and positively effecting diabetes", but is also "effective for nausea, indigestion and abdominal distensions". And the third was Herbex Attack the Fat Syrup, which is powerful "herbal syrup that will help you lose weight".

The problem was that Herbex's expert, one Dr RC Sandell, was anything but credible. What's more than a little worrying about that is the fact that before this case, the ASA had recognised Sandell as a credible expert in the field of CAMs in a number of matters, including those involving Herbex products.

But it seems alarm bells started ringing when the Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa (AHPSCSA) sent an email to the ASA, saying that Sandell, although registered as an acupuncturist, was not registered as a herbal practitioner, and was therefore not authorised to prescribe or administer herbal medicines. Which, of course, made his status as an expert in the field of herbal medicines very suspect.

Justice O'Regan said that Sandell, in his substantiation of the three Herbex products, had given a description of the main ingredients of the products, and spoken of how the "synergistic action" between the ingredients made the products so effective. In support of this, Sandell had attached excerpts from the au-

thoritative Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database (NMCD). But, as Steinman had highlighted in his objection, the NMCD in fact didn't support what Sandell said.

O'Regan gave a number of examples. Whereas Sandell had said that spirulina "reduces appetite and improves fat metabolism", the NMCD said that "preliminary research shows that taking spirulina blue-green algae does not seem to help reduce weight". There were similar contradictions regarding a number of the product's other ingredients, including *Garcinia Cambogia*, *Yerba Maté*, *camellia sinensis* (green tea), ginger and ginseng. O'Regan described these contradictions as "significant". She said that Sandell's evidence was "not credible evidence".

(Whether Sandell had assumed that no one would bother to read the NMCD excerpts, or had not even read them himself, we'll probably never know.)

Obviously aware that there was a problem with Sandell's evidence, Herbex tried to submit other substantiation. O'Regan said that "substantiation provided after the date of the advertisement is not ordinarily permissible", but she agreed to look at what was submitted: reports from another three doctors. Even these were not very good. O'Regan said there were still unexplained inconsistencies – "a lack of fit" between what the various doctors said and what appeared in the NMCD. A cock-up of note, by all accounts.

O'Regan had to deal with other issues. Herbex had argued that it was not bound by the ASA code. O'Regan examined the ASA in some detail, describing it as a system of "self-regulation in the public interest". She





Non-members can legally ignore Advertising Standards Authority rulings

said that although the members of the ASA tend to be organisations or associations rather than companies, many companies are bound by way of contract because they belong to organisations that are ASA members.

Because Herbex was a member of a body called the Health Products Association – a member of the ASA – it was bound by the ASA code. (The HPA's own constitution

contains a Code of Practice that says that its members' adverts must not be misleading, and that they must conform to the ASA Code.)

One desperate argument raised by Herbex was that the ASA code doesn't extend to advertising material on a company's website. Wisely that point was withdrawn at the hearing.

So: greater clarity on the role and reach of the ASA. A strong suggestion that substantiations will be examined far more critically. Vindication for Steinman. A great big kick up the rear for Herbex.

But is that the end of the matter? Hardly! With the money that's at stake with weight-loss products, it's no surprise that there's now a high court application challenging the ASA's powers. Johannesburg law firm, Fluxmans, is acting in this matter. And Fluxmans's partner Saul Sloot has been quite vocal on the issue of the ASA of late.

Sloot published an article in *Bizcommunity* on 22 May last year titled "Is the ASA flouting the CPA?" He argued that the ASA – "a self-regulatory body whose membership is voluntary and whose rules only bind its members" – contravenes the Consumer Protection Act when it sends out letters to companies against whom advertising complaints have been lodged.

Sloot's argument is that the letter tells the advertiser many things: that there's been such-and-such a complaint; that a response must be filed by a certain date; that if there's no response within that time a ruling will be made; that the ruling may involve a so-called "Ad Alert" warning the ASA member not to accept the advert; and that the advertiser will have a right of appeal if it loses, provided that it's prepared to stump up the R150,000 fee.

But what the letter doesn't tell the advertiser is that the ASA doesn't have jurisdiction over non-members; that the code only binds members; and that non-members can legally ignore ASA letters and rulings.

Sloot suggests that most people who receive ASA letters respond because they believe they have to.

The legal proceedings will no doubt run for years. *Noseweek* will keep an eye on them. ■


AND NOW FOR
SOMETHING
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT.

RED WINE
WITH ICE.

"TALL HORSE,
MY WAY."

Not for Sale To
Persons Under
the Age of 18.

Reaching for the stars



While many of us on the southern tip are gnashing our teeth over power blackouts, xenophobic rampages and fiscal cliffs, Dr Bernie Fanaroff, world-renowned astronomer and director of the South African Square Kilometre Array (SKA), has Africa aiming for the stars.
By Sue Segar

YOU SEE LOTS AND LOTS OF nothing... and then all of a sudden there's this huge, high-tech facility in the middle of nowhere. Every time I see it, I feel so proud of our fantastic team – and so hopeful about what this is going to do for our country...

Dr Bernie Fanaroff, director of Square Kilometre Array (SKA) South Africa, is sitting in the busy SKA head office in Pinelands, Cape Town, talking about the remote site, 80km outside Carnarvon in Karoo, where the core of the mega-telescope is being built.

"We recently took the BRICS ministers there. They were all so excited. The British minister said: 'we have to participate' and then committed a million pounds..."

Since Team Fanaroff's formidable orchestration of South Africa's winning bid to host the project, house prices in the once-sleepy sheep-farming town have soared. Scientists fly in on chartered planes. There's now a restaurant called De Meerkat, named after the SKA's precursor MeerKAT telescope. Carnarvon kids have astronomers as role models.

Once completed, the SKA, co-located in South Africa and Australia, will be the largest and most powerful and sensitive radio telescope ever built and one of the biggest pieces of scientific infrastructure on earth. It will enable scientists to make huge 3D maps of the universe which will survey it across cosmic time.

Scientists say it will be like making a film of how the universe developed, from before there were stars. The telescope will help them to try to find answers to some of the most compelling questions about the universe, such as how are galaxies formed, what is dark energy and is there other life out there? It also promises to create numerous jobs in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa.

His friends have described the much-loved Fanaroff as "phlegmatic", "stubborn" and "nobody's fool", but his understated manner belies his passion for the mega-project.

Besides being an astronomer with a galaxy classification named after him, he has been a trade union leader and a top government official. When, in 2003, he was recruited to head South Africa's bid for the SKA against huge international competition, his dogged negotiating skills and strategic thinking helped make him the man for the job. Old comrades describe

him as loyal, humble and determined. Former Science and Technology minister Derek Hanekom once said he was a "hugely underrated" man who works quietly behind the scenes and stays out of the limelight. "The SKA and Bernie have to be synonymous".

The SKA will eventually comprise thousands of radio receivers and dishes spread across South Africa, several other African countries and Western Australia. The MeerKAT antennae, which will be a significant component of the first phase of SKA, are able to generate enough data to fill 700,000 x 32GB iPods daily.

SKA was conceived of in the 1990s after radio astronomers had started talking about the need for a telescope with a collecting area of one square kilometre to take astronomy to new levels. A single dish would not have been big enough, so the idea was to build smaller dishes that could be connected.

Fanaroff asked the Treasury to fund the Karoo Array Telescope (the seven-dish KAT), which is now operational, and the MeerKAT, to be completed in two years' time. The first phase of the SKA is expected to be completed in 2020, and the second stage, by late 2024.

The government threw its weight behind the project and Fanaroff is quick to praise the "excellent" science ministers who believed in it: Naledi Pandor, Derek Hanekom and Ben Ngubane.

Team Fanaroff's bid document was 27,000 pages long, and, in May 2012, it was announced that South Africa had won the bulk of the project, with a smaller part going to Australia.

A year later, Fanaroff was awarded South Africa's second-highest honour, the Order of Mapungubwe (Silver), for excellence and exceptional achievement.

Last December, the Max Planck Society (independent association of German research institutes) made available €11m (about R150m) to build and instal radio receivers on the MeerKAT.

Fanaroff can't wait to see what the telescope comes up with. "One of the most exciting things is that we thought we understood pretty much what the universe is made of: atoms and photons, in other words, matter and energy. But what we have discovered over the past few decades is that most of the universe is dark energy and dark matter.

"Dark energy is what makes the universe expand faster and faster. It is what holds the galaxies and the clusters of

The telescope will help scientists find answers to the most compelling questions about the universe



Astronomical achievement: Dr Bernie Fanaroff

galaxies together. They are called dark because we can't touch them and feel them so we don't know what they are. We know they are there because dark matter has a gravitational pull but it doesn't seem to interact in any other way. We also know it's there because it is making the universe expand faster, but that seems to be the only way it interacts... so we don't know what that is all about either.

"It's almost like going back to the time of Copernicus, when he changed our understanding of the universe. We are almost in the same position where we thought we understood... and it turns out we don't, so the big challenge is: What is dark energy? What is dark matter? And there are many other challenges..."

At least 100 young astronomers, telescope operators and engineers work long hours at the Pinelands office.

"Most of our engineers working on the MeerKAT telescope and on the design effort for SKA are here... They complain that I micro-manage them, but it's not true," jokes Fanaroff.

"I am amazed at how clever, capable

and committed these young people are. If you come round here in the evenings, you will find people still working... because they're excited about what they are doing. One of the teams worked right through Christmas and New Year in 2013 and last year. They wanted to keep up to schedule. Nobody asked them to do that.

"They have done such fantastic work. We recently tested the receivers for the MeerKAT telescope and they have performed much better than we specified. In effect we will get twice as much telescope for the same money. This is thanks to a group of young South Africans.

"At the beginning of this project, a lot of people in the international community couldn't really conceive that you could build the world's most exciting science instrument on this scale in Africa. Today people take it for granted. Nowadays people in the radio astronomy community will tell you that South Africa is recognised widely as one of the leading places to do radio astronomy in the world. That has been very satisfying.

"The youngsters we have here have

been recognised among some of the most outstanding engineers and scientists in the world..."

"One of the professors at Cambridge University told me a couple of our people (working on science data processing) are definitely the best he's come across and if he could poach them he would.

"We have shown that our young people can play a leading role throughout the world in developing the science and the technology for the SKA. We can do this with anything if we set our minds to it."

Besides the ever-growing numbers of young South Africans who are coming into the universities and into the project, the SKA work is drawing large numbers of outstanding researchers from all over Africa and the world who want to be part of the action.

Countries partnering SKA in hosting remote stations and in a scholarship and skills-building programme include Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.

The SKA organisation includes scientists from 11 countries and has awarded

Stubborn nerd with a political conscience

HIS FATHER, ISAAC, WAS BORN IN Latvia and emigrated to South Africa in 1910. The family of his mother Fanny came from Latvia and Lithuania and she was born in Benoni. Bernie was born in Johannesburg in 1947.

Both Fanaroff's parents were active trade unionists and taught at night schools. "I was born into a household where human beings were valued and respected. My parents were humble and unassuming and never driven by money. They loved teaching. One thing that worries me in today's world is that people don't seem to respect each other. They're becoming more and more narcissistic."

Fanaroff attended North View High School in Johannesburg before obtaining a degree in Theoretical Physics at Wits University in 1970. Four years later he had a Cambridge doctorate in Radio Astronomy. While there, he and colleague Julia Riley identified the two classes of radio sources that now bear their names – Fanaroff and Riley class I and class II sources, or FR-I and FR-II, as they are now universally known.

As a student, Fanaroff steered clear of politics. "I concentrated on being a nerd, which comes naturally. I was shy and very hard-working. My interests were cosmology, physics and tennis." But he changed direction when he returned to South Africa in the mid-70s and started teaching at Wits. By then he had become intensely aware of the injustices of apartheid and particularly of the exploitation of workers.

"I was obviously very uncomfortable... so I looked around to see what would be interesting and useful to do. In 1975 I discovered the Industrial Aid Society which was organising workers in Johannesburg in the way that had happened in Durban a year or two earlier."

Fanaroff left Wits in 1976, to help set up the Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu), later the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa). For the next 19 years he was organiser, negotiator and national secretary for the union, based in Johannesburg, starting on a salary of R140 a month. He became renowned for his negotiating skills and persuasive powers.

In the late 1980s, Fanaroff and colleagues started drafting a workers' charter that was taken up by the ANC immediately after the organisation was unbanned. When fellow unionist Jay Naidoo was appointed minister without portfolio in the Mandela presidency, responsible for the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), he asked Fanaroff to become deputy director-general in the presidency. Fanaroff's specific responsibility was to head the office of the RDP – "not an easy job".

"Coming into government in the RDP was immensely exciting. When we arrived at the Union Buildings in May, 1994, none of us knew how to order stationery, it took us two weeks to find out how to turn on the heating... but there was a huge amount of enthusiasm and goodwill. None of us knew much about government either... to an extent we had to make it up as we went along."

Realising the immense challenges of implementing the RDP, Fanaroff persuaded Eskom, Armscor, Murray & Roberts and a range of other entities to send him skilled engineers and project manag-

African light

more than 400 bursaries to universities to train young people to work on the mega-project.

At a recent conference for SKA bursary holders in Stellenbosch, the atmosphere was abuzz with young scientists – many from African countries – swapping notes. It was evident that the project has taken pains to nurture young African women particularly – and that they are living up to all their sponsors' expectations (see "African stars" pictured right).

In an interview, Dr Rick Perley of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in the USA, gave a moving description of how impressed he had been by the energy and enthusiasm of the young South Africans who went over to the US to "see how we do things".

"They reminded us of the way we used to be. We have had numerous people from all over the world coming to us for advice – but the South Africans had a real effect on us. For us, the reminder was like being reborn," he said. "Young people need a vision, something to believe in."

Fanaroff continues explaining what

ers to help with RDP projects.

"Mandela wanted the RDP on the ground in 100 days. The pressures were immense... we gave ourselves very little slack and quite unrealistic timelines – and the media did too.

"In retrospect you can't change a country so quickly. If we had understood that at the time and moved slowly we could have embedded things better."

When the RDP office was closed in 1996, then Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi asked Fanaroff to join the department's secretariat, where he remained until Jackie Selebi became police commissioner in 2000. "Selebi saw no need for a civilian secretariat and wanted to absorb us into the police. But I did not see myself as a policeman."

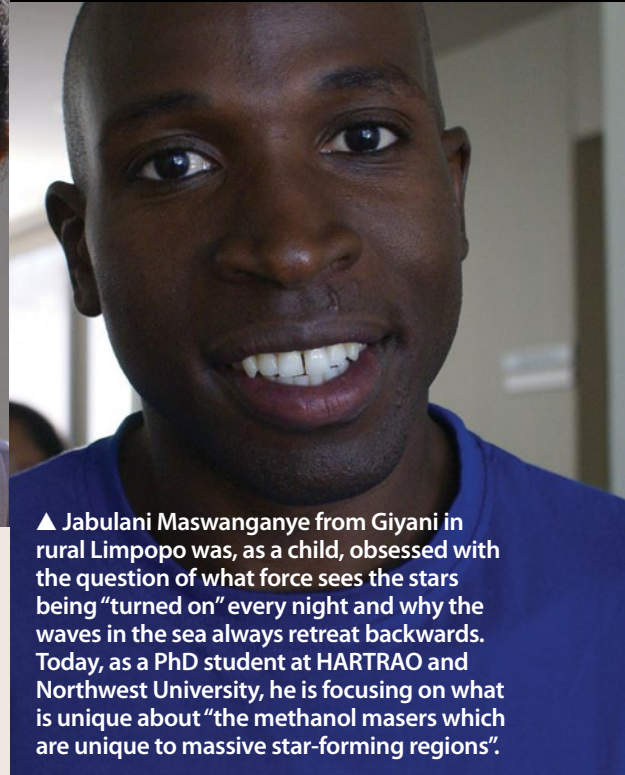
One of Fanaroff's most important achievements, he believes, is to have led the team that wrote the Firearm Control Act, introduced in 2000.

"Statistics have shown there was quite a dramatic decrease in firearm mortality after the law was introduced. The issue of violence in our society is such an important one. I hate people being killed."

Fanaroff returned to astronomy in 2003 when he was asked to head the South African bid to host the SKA



◀ Zara Randriamanakoto (29) of Antsirabe, Madagascar, did her Honours degree in Astrophysics and Space Science under the National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme at UCT and is in the final year for her doctorate at the same university.



▲ Jabulani Maswanganye from Giyani in rural Limpopo was, as a child, obsessed with the question of what force sees the stars being "turned on" every night and why the waves in the sea always retreat backwards. Today, as a PhD student at HARTRAO and Northwest University, he is focusing on what is unique about "the methanol masers which are unique to massive star-forming regions".

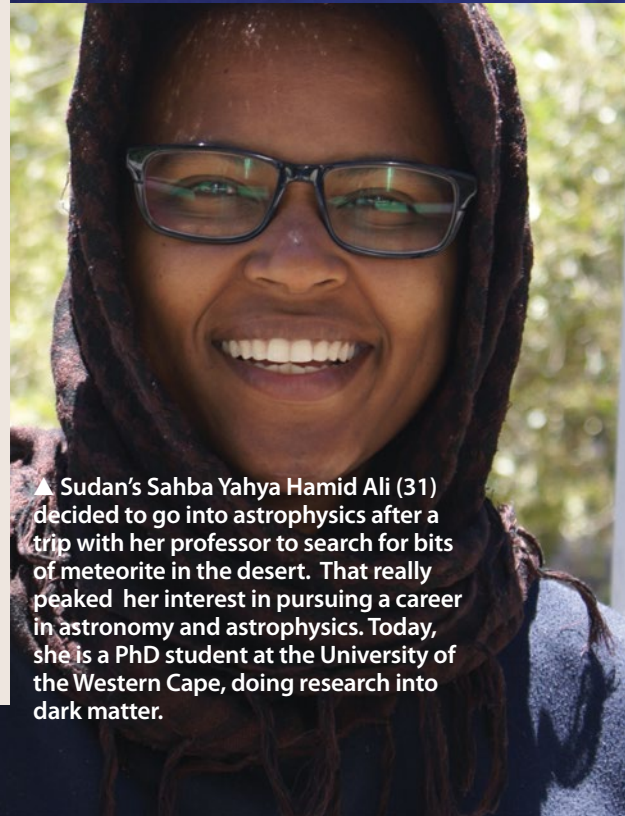
(Square Kilometre Array) – the world's largest telescope. Since then he has received numerous awards and accolades for his work on the project, including honorary doctorates from several South African universities and the Order of Mapungubwe (Silver). He has also served as a non-executive director of Eskom, a visiting professor in Physics at Oxford University and is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society.

He is due to retire at the end of this year and will be succeeded by former South African Nuclear Energy Corporation chief executive Rob Adam. However Fanaroff will act as strategic advisor on the project until December 2017.

Fanaroff lives in Mouille Point, Cape Town, with his wife, Wendy Vogel. "We love walking and I am trying to get back into tennis. We also love going to the theatre and opera and listening to music.

When he is not reading about science, history or economics, he dips into books on Yiddish culture. He can plough through a detective novel a day.

Asked what drives him, Fanaroff says: "I want to contribute – and just make things happen. My wife and friends will tell you I am very stubborn. If people say no to something, it encourages me to keep on going until they say yes. ■

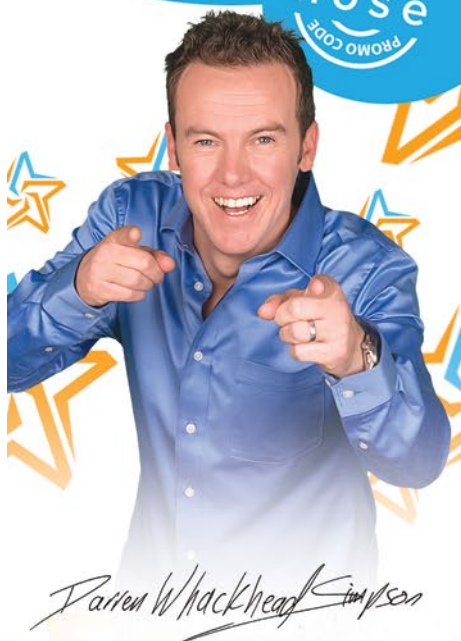


▲ Sudan's Sahba Yahya Hamid Ali (31) decided to go into astrophysics after a trip with her professor to search for bits of meteorite in the desert. That really peaked her interest in pursuing a career in astronomy and astrophysics. Today, she is a PhD student at the University of the Western Cape, doing research into dark matter.

lotto  star

BET ON THE
WORLDS
BIGGEST
LOTTERIES
JACKPOTS

PROMO CODE
nose
PROMO CODE



Parren Whackhead Simpson

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the telescopes will achieve: “We want to detect more planets, to understand how planets form around stars. We want to detect life. One of the nice things about SKA is that it will be so sensitive that we will be able to detect radio transmissions from civilisations without their having to be directly beaming a transmission at us.

“The way people look for civilization is that they point at stars fairly close to the sun and hope that somebody up there has a big transmitter that’s pointing at the earth and beaming a message to us. But with the SKA you won’t need that...”

“SKA increases the chances that if there is a civilization out there, we would be able to see it.”

Fanaroff believes the SKA project will confound the traditional perceptions of Africa and lead to major benefits for a continent not traditionally known for cutting-edge science and technology. The SKA could be the next great economic growth story, he believes.

“We don’t accept that South Africa has to remain on the edge of civilization.”

In an address to University of Cape Town graduands last year, Fanaroff challenged young South Africans to “go out and win Nobel prizes for Africa”, saying there was no reason they shouldn’t.

Which questions would he personally want answered through the SKA?

“When I did my PhD, I worked on understanding how galaxies generate radio waves and the big jets of energy that come out of them. I will be really interested to see if we can finally solve those problems and understand what goes on inside these huge galaxies with black holes in the middle of them...”

“But the most exciting science that SKA will do is to make a detailed map of the universe from the time before the first stars and galaxies formed and [for us to] be able to watch the universe as it evolves over thirteen-and-a-half billion years and see what drives it, and how does it expand, and how do the galaxies form, how do the clusters of galaxies form? So that will be very exciting to understand.”

Is Fanaroff fascinated by the notion of other civilisations?

“Yes, but to be honest, I am more taken with the idea of how the universe has evolved and how galaxies are formed.

“I have always pretty much taken for granted that there has to be life elsewhere in the universe. Astronomers have detected more and more planets that could be habitable and if you multiply our galaxy

with all these planets, by the number of galaxies in the universe, the chances of there not being life elsewhere are so small as to be, I think, zero, effectively. In other words there has to be life elsewhere.”

He gives me a matter-of-fact smile and continues: “But, whether we will see it is another question, as we are talking about very large distances.”

As we wind down, Fanaroff says we have not even begun to discuss the other huge area of development that the SKA project will bring to South Africa.

“It is in what we call big data, a huge new global industry which will be a trillion-dollar industry by 2020.

“We are so often asked whether there is a commercial spin-off from the SKA. Most of the member countries of SKA are now saying explicitly that one of the main reasons for their participation, besides the science, is that the volumes of data which the SKA will generate are so huge that it is a natural introduction into big data.

“Now no country in the world has enough data scientists... we are already starting to train people in the processing and analysis of huge quantities of data which can either be used for astronomy, or for the other areas of big data: smart cities or health or genome analysis.

“So we can do one of two things: we could say ‘we are just in Africa, there’s no point in trying too hard’ or we can invest seriously in big data. If we are serious and if we invest seriously in big data, we can become a world leading player...”

“It is not as though you have to build factories; you have to build clever young people – and we’ve got them.

“We are starting projects already, in what we call big data Africa, built around our SKA work. We are working with universities throughout the country to build up centres of expertise on various aspects of big data. We are also doing courses with our African partner countries, so we have done workshops in Namibia, Kenya, Mauritius, and Botswana, to start developing big data capacity in those countries as well.”

Fanaroff, who is nearing his 70s, concedes that he might not live to see all the wonders that the SKA project will reveal.

“But it’s still a dream come true for me.

“One of the things that it shows is that where we can develop an exciting vision and people buy into the vision and we all pull together, then we can achieve anything we want to achieve. Really.” ■

HOT WATER

Reckless mining is poisoning the country's vital resources. By Beatrice Wiltshire

ECO-TOURISM IN SOUTH AFRICA is under threat. Tourism is a major source of income, outperforming all other sectors of the economy, with the Kruger National Park, one of the largest conservation areas in Africa, attracting over a million visitors a year. This income supports between 300,000 and 600,000 people who live in the park's surrounding areas.

Such is the finding of a study commissioned by SANParks and conducted by the Tourism Research in Economic Environments and Society (TREES) whose director is Professor Melville Saayman of the North-West University's Potchefstroom campus.

But eco-tourism is threatened by ever-escalating mining operations which affect the Olifants River and its tributaries that supply life-giving water to the game parks. The poisoning of these waters with acid mine drainage is all the

more serious as South Africa is a water-scarce country, with demand significantly exceeding the water supply. Notwithstanding, there are between 3,000 and 4,000 new applications for mining and prospecting within Mpumalanga.

In the Krugersdorp Game Reserve the vital water of the Tweelopiespruit has been contaminated by Acid Mine Drainage (AMD). This river is now designated a Class 5 river – acutely toxic – and the poisoned stream has contaminated wetlands within the reserve, causing most of the aquatic biota to be wiped out.

Photographs (see next page) show two hippo bulls covered in metal sludge.

A 2006 Tweelopies Final Environmental Impact Document regarding the effects of the discharge of treated mine water via the Tweelopiespruit records the presence of “yellow boy” or precipitated metals such as lead, manganese, aluminium, cobalt, nickel, uranium etc – many of which are present in

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toxic concentrations in acid mine water.

Aquatic biomonitoring results adduce evidence of the acutely toxic status of the Tweelopiespruit.

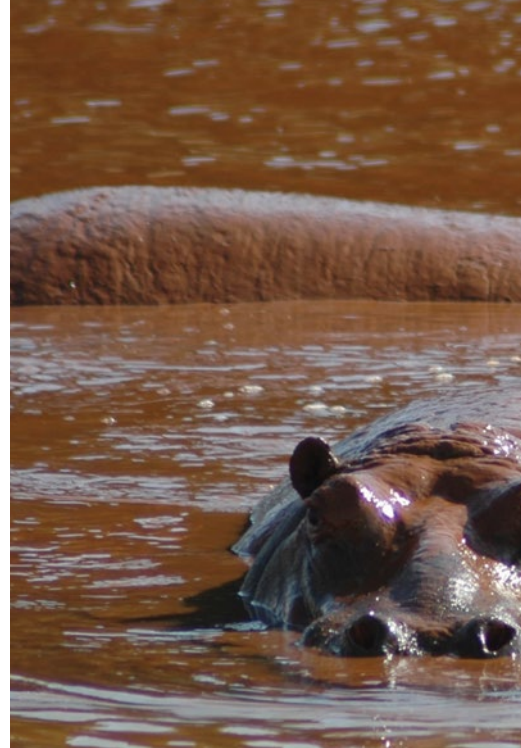
For more than a decade Environmental activist Mariette Liefferink has been warning of the AMD caused by the non-rehabilitation of abandoned mines. When she first set out to create awareness about the dangers, it was denied. But amid the denials – and even ridicule – this environmental marathon runner persisted, in true Erin Brockovich style, leaving no stone unturned. “Now AMD is accepted as a fact,” she says.

Liefferink questions whether the government is fully aware of the direct negative effect of mining operations on game reserves, Freshwater Ecosystem Prior-

ity Areas and high biodiversity areas in South Africa, such as in Mpumalanga, the Krugersdorp Game Reserve, Pilanesberg National Park and the Madikwe National Park – which fall within the proposed Heritage Park.

Mining operations have been sanctioned by the government in 41 river systems and wetlands, thereby destroying their biodiversity and ecosystems. This includes the Olifants River catchment area and its tributaries.

Water and Sanitation minister Nomvula Mokonyane – supposed custodian of South Africa’s water systems – admitted, in answer to a parliamentary question from the DA at the end of 2014, that she and her predecessor Edna Molewa had sanctioned the mining, most of which



Not all gloom and doom

THE FEDERATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE Environment (FSE) had some heartening successes last year, its CEO, Marietta Liefferink, told the Envass (Environmental Assurance) Conference in October.

The one-of-its-kind indaba attempted to cover the most pertinent environmental matters applicable to South African industry and left the delegates better equipped and informed to make decisions and do what is necessary in 2015.

Successes included the fact that major roleplayers attended the conference: officials of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the mining industry and the National Nuclear Regulator (NNR).

From its previous position of blanket denial, the DWS has moved towards acknowledgement that Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) presents a real risk to water security, economic growth and job creation and there is recognition that in order to ensure water security in the Vaal River System, the long-term treatment of AMD must be implemented.

Regarding the mining industry, the proposed amendments to regulations and laws – regulations pertaining to the financial provision for the rehabilitation, closure and post-closure of prospecting, exploration, mining or production operations under the Environmental Management Act – a holder must make financial

provision for, inter alia, “remediation and management of latent or residual environmental impacts which may become known in the future, including the pumping and treatment of polluted or extraneous water”. In effect the polluter pays principle.

There has also been a paradigm shift in the profile of corporate social and environmental initiatives by mining companies such as Sibanye Gold and Gold Fields, with the facilitation of new approaches to – and forms of engagement with – communities surrounding mines.

There has also been greater community involvement in decision-making as well as the evolution from a short-term means of meeting regulatory and tender requirements, to a longer term, more strategic channel for building enduring relationships and risk mitigation.

The National Nuclear Regulator (NNR), after years of looking the other way, has now acknowledged that provision should be made for epidemiological studies around nuclear facilities through the use of technical support organisations. Such studies have thus far not been conducted.

Currently the situation of affected communities in informal settlements near uranium tailings is less than ideal – or in accordance with good practice – and the health effects would be chronic.

There has also been an acknowledge-

ment of the radiological effects of contaminated wetlands, rivers and dams. A more detailed investigation may be justified.

The NNR would assess the radiological impacts associated with the decant of Acid Mine Drainage and it has also acknowledged that remedial actions of the Wonderfontein Catchment Area would have to be performed by a body authorised by the NNR.

The NNR’s amendment of the National Nuclear Regulator Act 47 of 1999, now includes all sources of radiation, as well as potential hazards from historic activities that are perceived not to have been included in current legislation.

Processes are being developed for better communication with the public and other stakeholders and it is accepted that the findings and recommendations of governmental and peer-reviewed academic reports can be used by the NNR to strengthen its knowledge base, to better understand the environment it is regulating and to assist in refining legislation and improving regulations and internal regulatory processes.

There will be cooperation of the NNR with the Department of Mineral Resources concerning the rehabilitation of ownerless sites.

Well, those are the aspirational statements. Let’s see if they are going to be fulfilled. ■



Hippos encrusted in metal sludge

forms only part of the problems Lieferrink and the FSE are combating on a daily basis. (See report on the Envass Conference, box, previous page.)

Meanwhile, the buck stops with the government – which seems oblivious to the environmentally deleterious effect caused by the mining industry on conservation areas such as the Krugersdorp Game Reserve and the Pilanesberg National Park.

Says Lieferrink: “Eco-tourism is sustainable, mining in sensitive areas is not. The government is busy destroying eco-tourism.”

Lieferrink is incensed by a statement made by Water Affairs minister Mokonyane at a discussion on AMD on 28th November – that a refurbished treatment plant in the western mining basin “has accomplished eradication of surface decant with consequential improvement in the water resources of the area”.

Lieferrink refutes this: “Apart from August 2012 to December 2013 during which period the decant stopped, raw AMD continued to flow into the receiving environment.”

Lieferrink also points out that Mokonyane was only appointed minister in May and needed to be fully briefed on acid mine drainage pollution on the Witwatersrand.

“Because of this, the government’s long-term feasibility study on the treatment of AMD, that was completed 18 months ago, has not been signed off.

“This signing off, after discussion with stakeholders, would have validated the recommendations as well as ensured that all possible options were considered while taking into account the availability of state resources. Clearly this was not done.

“Furthermore,” she says, “there has been no monitoring of the water quality in terms of the environmental authorisation of the immediate-term treatment of AMD. Since her department failed to submit monitoring reports to the Department of Environmental Affairs, in compliance with the terms and conditions of the environmental authorisation, the impacts of the raw AMD have not been assessed and the quality of the treated and untreated AMD has not been monitored.”

The matter has been handed over to the Green Scorpions for action. ■

was done during the past three years.

Paul Fairall, environmental consultant and winner of the Mondi National Wetlands Award and board member of the Wetland Society of South Africa, was outraged: “This is a gross violation of the National Water Law by the very people who are supposed to ensure its enforcement.”

Mokonyane appeared unphased: mining houses had to adhere to strict requirements which included the restoration of the environment at the end of their operations – a fact Fairall contested on the grounds that it was impossible to rehabilitate a water source. Besides, he said, such efforts would cost billions; more than the actual worth of the minerals extracted. “Some of the pans being mined are millions of years old and they contained life. Humans have never been able to recreate life,” he said.

“With the minister not seeming to be unduly concerned, is it any wonder that the Blue Scorpions appear to be looking the other way?” asks Mariette Lieferrink, CEO of the Federation for a Sustainable Environment (FSE). “If 41 mining houses are allowed to mine within water sources, why should the purported 100 others said to be mining illegally bother to comply with the National Water Act?”

A story in the *Sunday Times* of 3 November 2013, “State ignores illegal Zuma-Gupta mining,” described how a company linked to Duduzane Zuma, son of President Jacob Zuma, and the Gupta family had been mining illegally under the noses of government authorities for three years and left a trail of destruction in Mpumalanga. In the process “part of a wetland was destroyed so that there

exists the possibility that protected species were destroyed” – illegal under the Biodiversity Act.

Furthermore they had released “contaminated water and pollutants without the licence required by the Department of Water Affairs, had mined in a tributary of the Rietspruit River and then diverted the river without permission”.

All this flies in the face of the National Development Plan programme which states that mining investment and production should be done “in a way that is environmentally sound”.

Now Mpumalanga farmers (who provide food security) are up in arms. Apart from the environmental destruction, those who live near the illegal mining activity are affected by the fact that water was diverted from farming to mining.

In a water-scarce country “where 8% of our land produces 50% of our water, we really need to look intelligently and strategically at the problem,” says Christine Colvin, hydrologist and senior manager of the Freshwater Programme at the World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature South Africa.

Lieferrink points out that in a recent review of the National Water Resource Strategy-32, Niel van Wyk of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) stated: “A large part of future potential [of mining] is in areas of water scarcity... in some areas water is already flowing from agriculture to mining... the biggest impact of mines is on water quality... a threat to the resource that cannot be brushed away.”

For those who are not yet sufficiently depressed, the situation sketched above

What the Doctor ordered

Transcript records the sound and fury of Iqbal Survé's rage at Independent Newspapers staffers

“DIRTY-TRICKS. I AM NOT A LACKEY OF the ANC!” he exclaimed. “The Times group’s political petticoat is showing and it is branded in DA colours,” he said. “Up yours!” he told his staff. “Get lost!” he told his *Cape Times* editor, Alide Dasnois, claiming she was “effectively a racist, burning with hatred”. It was “hogwash” that the decision to fire her was related to the publication by the *Cape Times* of a public protector’s report that was damning of his fishing company.

Yes, that’s Dr Iqbal Survé, Independent Newspapers’ boss of bosses speaking.

In recent weeks University of Cape Town management and several publications have had occasion to experience Survé’s less caring bedside manner. But as a service to readers of Independent Newspapers and to posterity, *Noseweek* has decided to publish a more complete record of how he sees and describes himself as a “Boss backed by billions” on one hand, and his “lying, hate-filled” newspaper “underlings” on the other.

“...She will for ever be remembered in the world as editor that could not put Nelson Mandela on the front page... it will be written that way... I can assure you, okay? My billions will be used to make sure that it will be written that way, Alide. Okay? Disgusting! I describe her actions as disgusting... It will come

out.... She is a liar, she is an absolute liar! ... It is not emotion, I am calling the facts,” Survé ranted at Dasnois’s disciplinary hearing.

A transcript of the sound recording has been submitted to the Labour Court by axed Dasnois. It reflects Survé’s bitter antagonism towards her and his ruthlessness towards anyone who gets in his way.

In September 2013, the emperor-of-all-he-Survés visited the *Cape Times* to introduce himself as the new owner to the editorial staff. He told them there was a perception that the *Cape Times* was aligned to the Democratic Alliance. It was also his view that the staff he was addressing did not seem too happy to be seeing him there.

On 14 November 2013 he and then CEO Tony Howard, Western Cape general manager Sandy Naudé and Cape editor-in-chief Chris Whitfield met to discuss “the possibility” of moving Whitfield to the Eastern Cape – clearly a hostile strategy, since it would amount to a demotion and Whitfield was unlikely to want to move there anyway. At this meeting Survé flagged the name of Gasant Abarder, then at Cape Talk Radio, as a possible replacement for Dasnois, whom he thought unsuitable.

(Abarder was, indeed, appointed as editor in December 2013 and was moved to *The Argus* in February this year to replace Germaine Craig, who had proved

too critical of the ANC. Abarder also proved better at firing old – mainly white – hands at the *Cape Times*.)

On 5 December 2013, the company called a regional group strategy meeting at the Vineyard Hotel in Newlands, Cape Town, to which Dasnois was invited. It was on the same day that the *Cape Times* carried a feature article headed: “Dirty tricks – I am not a lackey of the ANC.” In it, Survé said the owners of rival Times Media group, which publishes the *Sunday Times* and *Business Day*, were driven by racism and support for the DA, and had been running a dirty tricks smear campaign to attack his integrity. Survé argued that the campaign was meant to convince advertisers and customers that he, Survé, was a crooked businessman “with no ability to run and grow business except through state dependent cronyism”. (*Who needs a campaign when Survé makes the point himself?* – Ed.)

He also argued that he was portrayed as being part of a clique that wanted to counter negative media portrayal of the ANC by buying media outlets that were friendlier to the ruling party, and that he would undermine the independence of journalists and titles in the group in pursuit of his pro-ANC, pro-(President Jacob) Zuma agenda.

In his piece, Survé wrote: “I am afraid the Times group’s political petticoat is showing, and it is branded in DA colours. To be certain, I personally have

no problem with that. They have every right to choose their party political allegiance, as they clearly have. But, then don't turn around and suggest that the rest of us have no right to have ours, or that we should apologise or try to explain away our histories." (It was about this time that his company Sekunjalo hosted an ANC fundraising campaign dinner ahead of the May 2014 election.)

Survé objected to how Sekunjalo was portrayed in Times Media reports of how the company had withdrawn under a cloud of controversy from an R800 million state tender for the operation and maintenance of marine patrol vessels.

By contrast, Survé declared "...The newspaper group that I now lead will remain what it has always been, a place where all world views, ideas and political schools are welcome, which is more than can be said of the mono-ideological publications run by my detractors."

Dasnois arrived late for the Vineyard Hotel meeting. After telling her to go away and return later, Survé ranted on to the others, describing the lead story – as well as an editorial – in that day's *Cape Times* as an "up yours" to himself. He is described in the court papers as being "visibly angry".

When Dasnois returned to the meeting, he launched into a tirade, describing her as too ideologically left-wing, not business-friendly enough and therefore not suitable for the *Cape Times*. After offering her a job on a labour bulletin, Survé informed Dasnois that, with immediate effect, she was no longer editor of the *Cape Times*. He told her to report to his office at 8.30 on Sunday morning (8 December). Then, in what is described in the court papers as "an ironic gesture", Survé offered Dasnois his hand. She declined to take it.

As Survé and Dasnois left the room, Sandy Naudé let slip to Whitfield that Survé had even threatened to discipline Group CEO Tony Howard for not firing Dasnois. (Howard, who is reputed to suffer from a weak backbone, was later "promoted" to deputy chairman.)

When, a short while later, Survé returned to the room at the Vineyard, he stated that he had spoken to his lawyer who had assured him

he had done the right thing: if he had not taken immediate action Dasnois would simply have continued publishing negative things about him in the newspaper.

Survé even took offence at Dasnois's failure to shake his hand. According to the chairman of Dasnois's disciplinary, Takudzwa Hove, the newspaper group's chief financial officer, by refusing to shake Survé's hand, she had "demonstrated rudeness and disrespect. She also challenge [sic] the chairman's authority in saying you can't implement the changes to the *Cape Times* editorial he was considering. It is clear from the evidence presented that she was not going to be subordinate to Survé, which is a prerequisite for any working relationship. On a balance of probabilities, it appears more like [sic] than not that she was insubordinate and insolent [sic]".

Two days after the showdown at the Vineyard Hotel in Newlands, Cape Town, law firm ENS, acting for Sekunjalo, issued a letter of demand in which their client threatened to sue the editor, the reporter and the owners of the

Cape Times for damages arising from the story on the Public Protector's report on the marine patrol tender.

The letter claimed that the Public Protector "clears Sekunjalo of all wrongdoing" and that in light of the months of "sustained attacks" on the integrity

**Survé declared:
"The newspaper
group I lead will
be a place where
all views, ideas and
political schools are
welcome"**



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of Sekunjalo, it would have been appropriate to have published a story indicating that “Sekunjalo had been vindicated”. The letter noted that unless a front-page apology was published Sekunjalo “will issue summons on Tuesday (10 December 2013) against the individuals concerned in their personal capacity, as well as against the newspaper, for the recovery of damages suffered by the company”. Whitfield refused to publish the apology, offering to resign if he were forced to do so. (He later left anyway.)

Dasnois points out in her papers that prior to the marine patrol story – which was the real reason she got fired – Survé already had his hands dirtied by his ANC connections: Brett Kebble had provided Sekunjalo, Survé’s fishing company, via his Johannesburg Consolidated Investments, with a financial bailout of some R70m when was facing possible liquidation as a consequence of its investment in Leisurennet. “Part of Kebble’s modus operandi was to ingratiate himself with powerful political figures by making substantial donations to the ANC,” the court papers state. Liquidators investigating Kebble and JCI reported that Survé had at times acted as a conduit in the transfer of these funds to the ANC.

At her disciplinary hearing in September last year Survé’s tune changed: He now said the publication in the *Cape Times* of the Public Protector’s report was not the reason for her dismissal. He described this as “hogwash”. The decision had been taken long before the Public Protector’s report had appeared...

Curiously Survé’s rage at the *Cape Times* lead of 6 September may have been because he had not seen a copy of the commemorative Mandela wrap-around. He suggested that Dasnois had decided not to strip the front page of the Sekunjalo story to make way for a report on Mandela’s death out of pure malice –because of her hatred of Survé; she was prepared to insult Mandela’s legacy and not put his death on the front page in order to promote her “sinister agenda”, he claimed. Of course, had she “stripped” the front page to accommodate a report on Mandela’s death, the lead story on the Public Protector’s report on Sekunjalo would not have appeared.

In the transcript, Survé says: “She was an angry, angry woman, okay... when she went to bed that Thursday night (ahead of the Friday 6 December

2013 edition) she went to bed with anger and she had planned... She was hoping the final report that the Public Protector was going to bring out... would find Sekunjalo guilty, so she can say ‘Up you, Dr Survé’ on the Friday morning.”

Survé changed the reasons for Dasnois’s axing several times over the months, but at the meeting at the Vineyard Hotel, when she asked him why she should step down immediately, he said that her conduct in not putting Madiba on the front page didn’t make her fit to continue to edit the *Cape Times*. When she protested that he could not do this to her, he said she could speak to him about her contractual terms as editor of the labour report.

Dasnois: “I will not listen to you. I will not accept this.”

Survé: “Well you have to... You will not be the editor of the *Cape Times* as of now.”

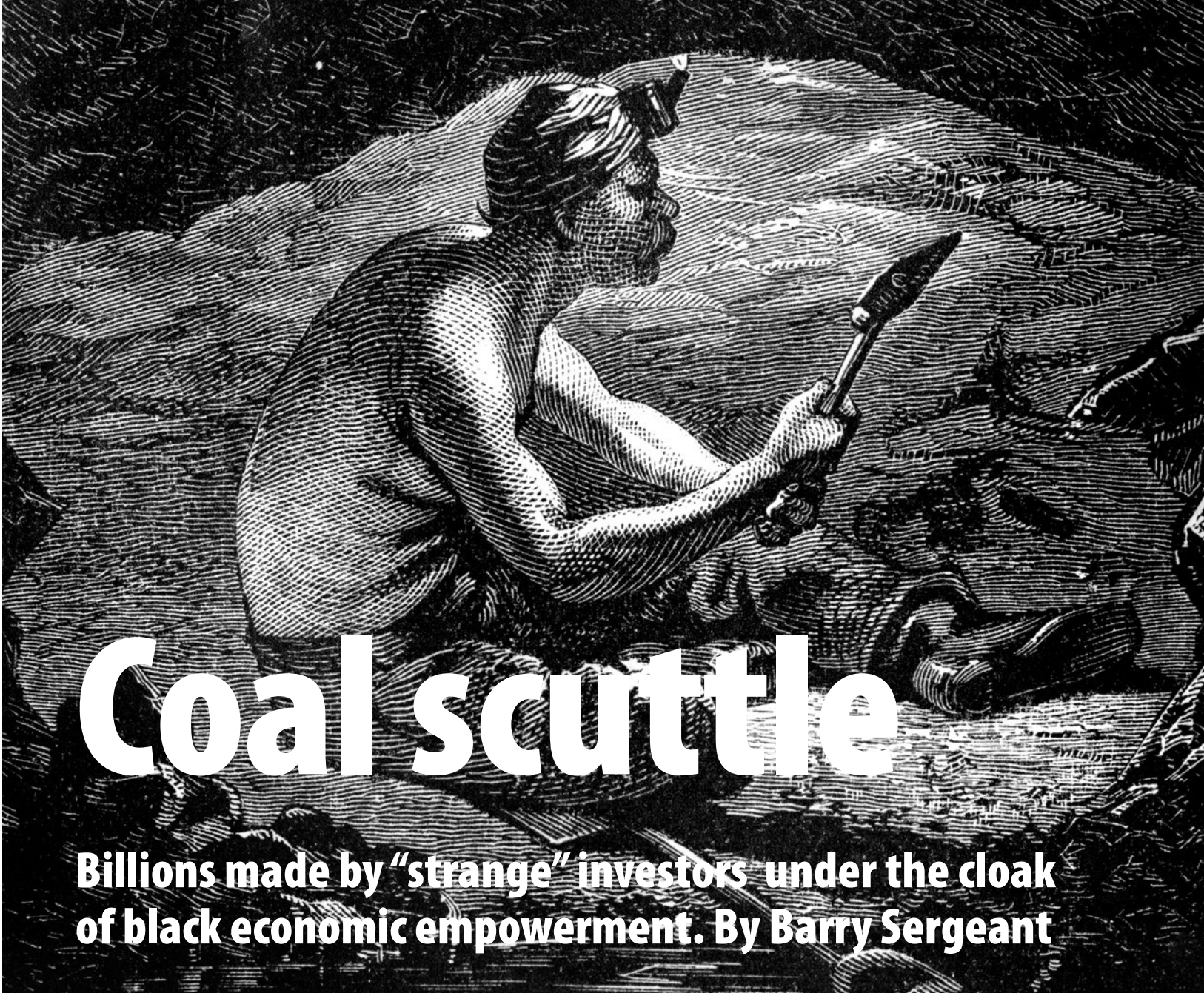
In the disciplinary hearing, Survé again accused Dasnois of being an irrational woman consumed with hate. “At no stage did she ever say anything about a wrapper... she was so consumed by anger, by a hatred... that she simply decided to incur the cost of a wrapper and put it out there. That is the truth of the matter. History will prove me right, okay, in more ways than one.”

He also said: “My intention is actually to have the facts around Alide made public in a very, very big way. And I’m quite happy to do that, because I think the truth must emerge eventually as to what actually happened and her conduct on that evening has to come out. Until I go to my grave that will come out. If I must use every single cent I have outside of Independent to do that, I will do that.”

Dasnois was formally fired for the second time in June. She is challenging her dismissal at the Labour Court and seeking a year’s salary – about R1.1m – as recompense.

The Sekunjalo article, written by Environment Writer Melanie Gosling, on 6 December 2013, was headlined: “Public Protector lays down the law.” It went on: “The Public Protector Thuli Madonsela found that the awarding of an R800m tender to the Sekunjalo consortium to manage the state fishery vessels was improper. Madonsela referred the decision on whether Sekunjalo’s conduct constituted collusive tendering to the competition commission...” ■

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Coal scuttle

Billions made by “strange” investors under the cloak of black economic empowerment. By Barry Sergeant

THE SAGA OF OPTIMUM COAL IS testimony, surely, to the extraordinary sophistication of some of the mind-boggling transactions that sweep invisibly through South Africa from time to time. These composite deals can involve billions of rand, and often have very interesting – possibly gratuitous (and suspect) – offshore components.

The Optimum Coal story, if put into a nutshell, would not be complicated. As part of its “BEE requirements”, BHP Billiton, the world’s biggest diversified resources group, sold Optimum Coal, a wholly-South African asset, into a BEE transaction. It is clear that BHP Billiton was interested only in the “BEE credits” it would receive for the deal, rather than

in implementing the BEE deal itself.

This was and is not unusual. BEE legislation is opaque and vague, often embarrassing, and includes various heavyweight discretions for politicians. The mining minister, for example, has a truly impressive set of powers to say-so in what should be a purely bureaucratic series of decisions.

In practice, companies are invariably advised, when advice is sought, to have deals pre-approved (by the politicians) before the sign-off is made.

A careful scrutiny of BEE deals shows that individual enrichment is at the core of most, if not all, of the deals. The US\$64m question is whether the individuals present in any particular deal have elsewhere concluded silent, unwritten

deals. That question hinges on another: why do obscure foreign-owned entities so often appear, seemingly from nowhere, to participate in major BEE deals?

When such deals are scrutinised, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they offer a convenient vehicle for shipping money offshore, in deals that would otherwise not be permitted by prevailing South African laws. Either way, it is clear that all kinds of elites are in on these deals, not only on the receiving side, but also, very much, on the side of those offering their expertise to set them up. The deals are conceived, designed and implemented largely to escape detection.

In the Optimum Coal saga, it can be argued, to reiterate a point raised above, that BHP Billiton would never have

signed off on the deal unless it was 100% certain that it would receive the BEE credits it required. The facts – in the public domain – show that a handful of individuals – just eight – reaped a harvest of what appears to be more than R3 billion, when Optimum Coal was listed, very publicly, on the JSE in March 2010.

The average realisation of the eight-person group was R453m, led by Mike Teke, who benefited to the tune of R760m. While classifications are unfortunate and sad, it should be noted that only four of the eight people in the group fit the definition of “black”. None are disadvantaged.

This raises questions over the meaning of “broad-based BEE”, even within the confines of a headache of a story.

To a certain extent, the numbers tell the story. The Optimum Coal prospectus, which was issued on 11 March 2010, showed that the group of eight – and other “founding” shareholders – were issued shares at R0.000005 each – a fraction of the cost of the paper they were printed on. These were the shares purchased in Optimum Coal, before it was listed. In other words, on the face value of the shares, R5.00 would have bought a million shares.

Optimum Coal’s listing price on the JSE was just below R32 a share, and it would later trade higher. Given its trading history, R38 a share can be cited as a fair average, when calculating the stock’s value. It is at this price that Teke and others could have sold their shares.

Teke held 20m shares in Optimum Coal. The price he paid for these shares has never been disclosed. After the company was listed, he could have realised the shares for more than R700m. As mentioned, if the group of eight had sold their shares for R38 each, they would have realised a total of R3.6bn (See table above).

At this point, it’s worth asking what on earth was really going on. First, South Africa’s aggressive BEE laws were and remain – even more so – in place, forcing the likes of BHP Billiton into various deals. Second, the area of BEE has become grimy to the point where a multinational such as BHP Billiton has good reasons to keep its hands clean: obtain the credits, and let third parties conclude the actual mechanics of the deal.

Third, there is a possibility that the Optimum Coal deals were driven from a higher level. The main clue to this lies in the fact that, at the time of listing, the

OPTIMUM’S SUPER ELITE		
	Initial shares in Optimum million	Value at R38/share Rm
Sivi Gounden	11,5	435
Mike Teke	20,0	760
Douglas Gain	1,0	38
Henry White	3,0	114
Thomas Borman	14,9	567
Peter Gain	15,5	587
Eliphus Monkoe	14,0	532
Mlungisi Kwini	15,5	590
Total	95,3	3623
Average		453

Figures are rounded. Sources: company documents, market prices

biggest shareholder in Optimum Coal was AMCIC Warrior Coal, a company registered in Mauritius.

This island-nation boasts notoriously opaque transparency laws and regulations, and is used by countless individuals and entities as a means to keeping certain facts and figures hush-hush. Mauritius is also, of course, a tax haven.

While the names of the group of eight were disclosed in Optimum Coal’s listing prospectus, it should be pointed out that the individuals behind the corporate names, such as AMCIC Warrior Mauritius, are unclear, although the entity is thought to be of US origin. JSE rules oblige the disclosure of “see-through” shareholdings of individuals, but do not require, at the same time, the names of the entities through which the individual’s shares are held.

As the table on the facing page shows, a good chunk, nearly a fifth, of the ownership of Optimum Coal had been somehow acquired by a foreign entity, with undisclosed shareholders. Given the priorities and aims of BEE, it is all but impossible to rationalise the presence of a foreign shareholder being the biggest stakeholder in an asset primed (apparently) for 100% BEE ownership in South Africa. BHP Billiton, to remind, had sold 100%

of Optimum Coal in the name of BEE.

So it was that not only was the group of eight to be worth nearly half a billion rand each, but there was a foreign entity in the room. The Optimum Coal prospectus warned, ironically, that “currency and shares are not freely transferable from South Africa and must be dealt with in terms of the exchange control regulations of the South African Reserve Bank... The exchange control regulations also regulate the acquisition by former residents and non-residents...”

At R38 an Optimum Coal share, the 42m shares held by AMCIC Warrior Coal would have been worth a princely R1.6bn.

If AMCIC Warrior Coal had any South African-resident shareholders, the flow of transactions would have been illegal, in terms of the prohibition on externalising profits made by residents within South Africa. If the entity had only foreign shareholders, were there concealed deals regarding the “aftermarket” flow of shares?

There had been another interesting entity, foreign by all accounts, in the form of Crystal Resources Fund, connected to various parties in and around Optimum Coal.

During 2007 Sivi Gounden (who made R400m-plus gross upon the listing of Optimum Coal) sold his indirect interests in an entity named Afarak, which held rights to certain undeveloped South African platinum deposits. It is not known how much Gounden initially paid for his shares in Optimum Coal.

A stake of 20% in Afarak went to Messrs Gain (who made nearly R600m gross when Optimum Coal was listed) and Borman (also nearly R600m gross). It is not known how much either Gain or Borman paid for their shares in Optimum Coal. Borman, who was approached specifically on this article, declined to disclose such information.

Gain and Borman then sold their combined 20% stake in Afarak to Crystal Resources Fund. In July 2009, Optimum Coal (in which, inter alia, Gounden, Gain and Borman were to be directors) bought an effective 26% interest in Afarak.

And then, lo and behold, Beacon Rock Corporate Services (Proprietary) Limited – in which Gain and Borman are shareholders and directors – was appointed by Optimum Coal to undertake certain work. Beacon Rock was and is “a provider of administrative and technical services”.

Beacon Rock was appointed to coordinate Afarak's prospecting activities. Beacon Rock also formed a view on Afarak's potential value. It seemed as natural as breathing that Optimum Coal would rely on Beacon Rock to turn Optimum Coal's investment in Afarak to account.

This raises the question over whether Borman and Gain were offered some kind of an incentive to sell an asset in which they could have continued to hold an indirect interest, via the Crystal Resources Fund, apparently a foreign entity. Borman denies that either he or Gain were offered any incentives, and insists that neither had any interest in Crystal Resources Fund.

On 13 April 2011, Aquarius Platinum announced that it had acquired Afarak for a princely US\$109.7m. At that point, the majority shareholders in Afarak were Kermas and Crystal Resources Fund, and Optimum Coal with its 26%. It was no secret, within the platinum sector, that Gain and Borman had for some time been involved in attempting to sell Afarak to a number of parties.

At the time of Aquarius's purchase of Afarak, the latter owed Kermas and Crystal Resources Fund R374m – funds which had been used for development, mainly prospecting, on the Afarak assets.

Foreign-registered entities have been used with impunity in many other BEE deals. Witwatersrand Consolidated Gold Resources, known as Wits Gold, listed on the JSE during April 2006. According to its prospectus, its founding shareholders included East Accrington Foundation (holding 21% of Wits Gold just prior to listing) and Rhodora 10%.

Both entities were registered in Liechtenstein, a territory notorious for laws that protect corporate secrets and, of course, a tax haven. Wits Gold had acquired a number of wholly-South African properties with gold-bearing potential, and had externalised from the country ownership of more than a fifth of the company.

Wits Gold was designed to be "well connected" from the start. Its vice-chairman, Taole Mokoena, came from Chancellor House, the ANC's "investment arm". (Chancellor House was a direct and significant shareholder in Wits Gold.) The chairman of Wits Gold, Adam Fleming, has long been a player on the South Af-

OPTIMUM COAL'S SHAREHOLDERS, JUST PRIOR TO LISTING

	Shares	Percentage
AMCIC Warrior Mauritius	42	18,7
Warrior Coal Investments	38	16,9
Kwini Mining Investments	26	11,6
Optimum Employee Benefit Trust	25	11,1
Optimum Community Trust	25	11,1
Micsan Investments	20	6,9
Monkoe Coal Investments	14	6,2
Other	40	17,5
Total	230	100

Sources: company documents, market prices

The main clue: the biggest shareholder was a company registered in Mauritius

rican scene, and has been cited as one of Brett Kebble's "mentors".

At one stage, the market value of Wits Gold ran into the billions of rand. The share price did eventually drift into the doldrums (investors finally tired of the storyline continually splashed out by Wits Gold's directors: in Toronto, where Wits Gold was also listed, the company's stock price declined from CA\$21.00 a share in January 2006 to a low of CA\$0.49 a share in 2014, a collapse of 98%, at which stage it was bought out by Johannesburg-listed Sibanye Gold), but long before that could happen, those in the know had sold their shares, making absolute fortunes.

As for Optimum Coal, it was on 15 May 2012 that the company issued a delisting document, prior to being taken over by Glencore, the transnational. At that stage AMCIC Warrior Mauritius had – no surprise – sold out all of its shares

in Optimum Coal. The document also makes it clear that by this stage, Messrs Borman and Gain, among others, had sold every single one of the shares they had held in Optimum Coal.

Optimum Coal was being taken over by a consortium that included Glencore and Lexshell, an entity 100% owned by Cyril Ramaphosa. The latter, who would later switch back into politics, had made most of his investments via Shanduka, but here, he was investing directly. Another point of interest is that a number of extremely well-qualified buyers had initially offered to buy Optimum. Instead, it went, essentially, to a group of individuals who had little, if any capital. Borman says that this "is not correct". At that stage, Glencore wouldn't have had a chance.

In more ways than one, South Africa's "mining in BEE" has been a bedraggled and poor cousin of developments over the past 15 years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When mining assets are first dealt under "new laws", exploitation occurs on a massive scale. There are always offshore entities involved. It is only at the second stage, when the "real deal" takes place, with real mining companies, that entities of any substance have any chance. Even then, members of the elite have to be heavily rewarded, simply for having their names attached to the deal. ■



One of the ones that got away

Rough: Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase & Co

JPMorgan bank mogul has a huge sense of entitlement.

By Robert Weissman

BANKS ARE UNDER ASSAULT. THAT'S what JPMorgan Chase & Co CEO Jamie Dimon claimed recently when announcing the record \$21.8 billion in profits that the US banking group raked in last year. Read on for what Robert Weissman, President of the US civil rights group Public Citizen had to say about that.

Dimon's latest comments, which range from out of touch to outright preposterous, expose anew the misbegotten, pathological sense of entitlement that poisons the thinking of Wall Street titans.

Before I present more of these Dimons in the rough, keep in mind: JPMorgan Chase & Co is the largest bank in the US and 2014 was its best year ever.

Regarding reasonable controls put in place after big banks like JPMorgan drove the global economy to the brink of destruction back in 2008, Dimon said: "In the old days, you dealt with one regulator when you had an issue, maybe two. Now it's five or six. It's a hard thing to deal with. You all should ask the question about how American that is."

Do I even need to point out that there

was obviously not enough regulation "in the old days"?

The crash occurred when Wall Street's bottomless greed went too long unchecked following Clinton and Bush-era deregulation. Restraints on the big banks have yet to catch up to what they once were or what they should be. And of course the financial behemoths, along with big business outfits like the US Chamber of Commerce, spend millions and millions lobbying against common-sense protections.

It's too bad that Dimon finds the Dodd-Frank reforms – intended in large part to help save the big banks from their own worst impulses – so onerous. But there are harder things to deal with in life, like losing your job or your home, that millions of Americans were needlessly forced to endure because of Wall Street's recklessness.

And Dimon's imperious, red-baiting question about how "American" the modest rules – which permitted JPMorgan to amass record profits of nearly \$22 billion in just a single year – are?

It's bad enough when corporations claim the same rights and privileges as living, breathing humans (eg the right

to fund a particular political party; the right to privacy). Does Dimon believe JPMorgan has a constitutional right to operate outside of the law altogether?

Dimon also spoke about how JPMorgan's profits would have been even greater if not for fines related to assorted wrongdoing committed under his watch over the past few years:

"Obviously, companies make mistakes. We try to resolve it, we try to fix it, we admit it. I want to... try to stop stepping in dogshit, which we do every now and then."

Dimon is talking about things like selling the risky mortgage-backed securities that catalysed the 2008 crash, manipulating international currency markets and domestic electricity rates, being involved with Bernie Madoff's ponzi scheme, and more. These are a lot more than errors of judgement.

And, despite Dimon's assertion that "we admit it", the settlements inadequately resolving these abuses typically evade any real admission of wrongdoing. So, for example, when JPMorgan agreed to a \$13bn settlement over improper sales of mortgage-backed securities, the company admitted it made "serious mis-

Dimon gets a bigger and bigger raise year after year, no matter how much trouble his company gets in

representations” to investors but did not admit it violated any laws.

Time after time, JPMorgan pays fines and penalties that, while they make headlines, are easily absorbed by a corporation of such unfathomable scale. Then it goes right back to work. Dimon himself seems to get a bigger and bigger raise year after year, no matter how much trouble his company gets in.

As for stepping where someone neglected to clean up after Fido? While most of us have probably suffered that nuisance, the metaphor is, tellingly, insufficient for the frequency and severity of JPMorgan’s wrongdoing and insensitive to the real harm inflicted on countless people throughout the world.

Finally, Dimon had some things to say about demands – for which Public Citizen is a leading voice, and which many investors are beginning to echo – to break up JPMorgan and other big banks:

“The model works from a business standpoint. If the regulators at the end of the day want JPMorgan to be split up, then that’s what will have to happen. We can’t fight the federal government if that’s their intent.”

Well, I’ll leave it to others to assess whether JPMorgan is worth more to its investors broken up.

But I can say this: The model of Goliath financial institutions does not work from the standpoint of the American economy or American democracy. By their sheer magnitude, and by the fear that their collapse would doom everything else, the big banks hold taxpayers, policymakers and

even law enforcement hostage.

And then there’s Dimon’s just-plain-weird suggestion that JPMorgan “can’t fight the federal government”.

His company, along with all the other Wall Street giants, employs an army of lobbyists who scurry around Washington, DC doing nothing but fighting the government.

Remember that Dimon personally called members of Congress in December as part of fighting efforts by Senator Elizabeth Warren and others to block rollbacks of Dodd-Frank (the US law tightening regulation of financial institutions), which at the last minute were sneaked into the federal spending bill that avoided a government shutdown. Jamie Dimon fought the law, and the law lost.

And the financial industry spends more on political contributions and lobbying – far more – than any other industry, which lets them use their vast wealth fighting those in government who put the needs of Main Street before the greed of Wall Street.

I really don’t know if Jamie Dimon could be more out of touch with the ideals and struggles of everyday Americans.

It all makes you wonder: Who’s assaulting whom?

● JPMorgan Chase is only one example of the many, many mega-corporations that Public Citizen takes on day in and day out. Jamie Dimon alone makes more in one year than it costs to run Public Citizen for a year. ■

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Pay back the money!

Trusting pensioners knotted in banking red-tape. By Koos Koekemoer

THE TIP-OFF WAS: WHY DON'T YOU get yourself to the Hermanus Magistrate's Court on Monday? "Someone's bringing a Small Claims case against Standard Bank. It relates to this widespread freezing of investment money following the African Bank failure. Could be interesting don't you think?"

Rough justice, I thought. And initial impressions did nothing to change that view. A dilapidated old building with multiple prefab extensions, cracked and dirty lime-green walls, flaking paint, linoleum floors, fluorescent lights, stifling heat, the ubiquitous picture of His Corruptness peering down at all those who dare to enter. Is it any wonder there's no respect for the law?

A few bored officials mill about. Local legals who finally get the chance to play judge strut around self-importantly in their gowns. A motley collection of people wait their turn. Most of the litigants are male and, perhaps because of the baking heat or perhaps because of the informality of small-town South Africa, most are wearing shorts, trainers and raised shades. They're all engrossed in their cell phones. *Suits* it isn't.

Finally the case is called: Anne Meershoek v Stephen van der Merwe (stone last, perhaps in recognition that this isn't your average "the electrician fucked up" small-claims case). Anne Meershoek is accompanied by her husband, Nico, whose accent suggests he's a Hollander. They're elderly – she's 70 and he's 80 they tell the court. They're nervously clutching a pile of documents.

Van der Merwe is an investment adviser employed by Standard Bank. He's not carrying any documents and he looks unconcerned. In fact, he looks like an investment adviser, but with a small-town twist – white shirt, chinos and boat shoes

without socks. The commissioner is a local attorney called Barney Steyn.

Steyn gets things going: he immediately tells the parties how things work, and puts them at ease by telling them how informal these proceedings are (not that Van der Merwe needs much help on this score). It's all very civilised, even impressive.

Anne Meershoek's case is simple: "I have some R110,000 in my Stanlib investment account which my husband transferred to me because he's so much older; I never gave Standard Bank the authority to use any of that money to bail out African Bank; in fact I wasn't even told that this was going to happen, I simply noticed that my statement was suddenly reflecting that R4,800 of my money had been taken because of 'Abil'; I didn't even know what Abil was, I had to make inquiries."

Her case is basically a variation of "Pay back the money".

Van der Merwe tries to explain: "Mrs Meershoek's money hasn't been taken, it's simply been frozen; African Bank was put into curatorship, not because it was insolvent, but because the Reserve Bank was unhappy with how it was being run; the Reserve Bank issued a directive that requires some 80-or-so funds to retain a percentage of their funds (these percentages vary, and in the case of Standard Bank funds they're between 3-4%); these retention funds are not being used to save African Bank, in fact the curator of the bank, one Winterboer, is restructuring things and he hopes to list a new bank (a good bank) by March or April 2015; this new bank will be underpinned by R10 billion put up by the big banks; before this can happen the retention funds will have to be released; although the so-called 'secondary debt' may well be lost, the 'senior debt' should

not be and this is what's relevant to Mrs Meershoek; so there's a very good chance that Mrs Meershoek will have her money back real soon."

"But why no notification?" asks Anne Meershoek.

"Yes that was unfortunate," says Van der Merwe. "That might have been because this thing coincided with the postal strike."

"How about email? And who gave Gill Marcus [former Reserve Bank Governor] the right to decide that our money could be used in the event of African Bank getting into trouble?" asks an outraged Nico Meershoek.

No-one can answer that one.

This is all very interesting says Steyn, but there is a point *in limine* to be considered – attorneys do, of course, have impressive language skills.

The Meershoeks look confused and Steyn explains that Van der Merwe has made the preliminary point that he's not the person who should be before the court, it should be his employer, Standard Bank. "I'm only the Standard Bank employee who happens to have given financial advice to the Meershoeks," says Van der Merwe.

This preliminary point is news to the Meershoeks, who apparently should have been sent a copy of Van der Merwe's document. The Clerk of the Court is blamed for the oversight and the proceedings are suspended for a few minutes so that the Meershoeks can read Van der Merwe's document.

The Meershoeks are undeterred by such chicanery: "Yes, obviously we know that we deal with Standard Bank, but Van der Merwe is the bank's representative in Hermanus; he's the one we've always dealt with, the person who persuaded us to put our money in this Stanlib fund; he told us that the investment

The "African Bank House" in Rooi Els – a steal at R65m



was safe, and there was certainly never any talk of money being frozen.

"Besides, when we spoke to the Clerk of the Court about how to initiate a small claims case we were told we should identify a particular individual, preferably one in Hermanus, for the summons. [*Another cock-up apparently.*]

"And anyway, the letter that we sent before summons was addressed to Standard Bank in Johannesburg – but this apparently never arrived. Again, thanks to the postal strike."

It's clear Steyn thinks Van der Merwe's point is not without merit. He asks the Meershoeks whether they want to drop this case and issue a fresh one against the bank. They seem offended by the suggestion.

"In that case we'll proceed says Steyn, but we'll need to postpone so that Van der Merwe can bring some documentation to prove that African Bank is in curatorship, and that the Reserve Bank did issue the directive."

A week later everyone returns to court. Van der Merwe brings the necessary documents. Steyn says that before he can consider the merits of the case he needs to deal with the issue of whether the correct party is in court.

"Are you quite sure you want to sue Mr Van der Merwe and not Standard Bank?" he asks Anne Meershoek. She's no longer so sure of herself. Yet she doesn't go down without a fight: "Van der Merwe is the

People like the Meershoeks have been treated shabbily by the financial services industry

person we always dealt with; he was the one who advised us to put our money in the Stanlib fund; he was the one who told us it was a safe investment, perfect for pensioners like us; what were they doing investing in African Bank when everyone knew it was bad news, if I'd known my money would be invested in African Bank I'd never have agreed to this; we tried to claim from Standard Bank by letter but that letter was never delivered because of the postal strike; it was the clerk of the court who told us to single out an individual in Hermanus; everything's

conspiring against us; at our age we can't be messing about like this; I really can't believe that things like this can happen in our country."

Steyn is sympathetic but unable to help. Anne Meershoek agrees to withdraw the case. Steyn tells her that she can issue a fresh summons against Standard Bank. He suggests she might want to get legal advice.

He considers this further and then acknowledges that the money at stake might not warrant legal advice. He offers some of his own: suing Standard Bank may involve a further difficulty because, as the money has simply been retained (hopefully to be released in the future), it's debatable whether Anne Meershoek has actually suffered any damage.

● The real rough justice is probably how people like the Meershoeks have been treated by those in the financial services industry – something that hits home if you take a drive to the tiny seaside resort of Rooi Els where, crouching on rocks at the water's edge, is a modern masterpiece of seaside architecture, built by a company of which African Bank head honcho Leon Kirkinis was a director. The steel structure took four years to build, according to architects Elphick Proome, which won the residential category in the 2013 Steel Awards for the home. It's on the market for a cool R65 million. The bemused locals refer to it as "African Bank House". ■

Power to the people

By 2040, nearly one billion people in Sub-Saharan Africa could have access to electricity, compared to 290 million today

INCREASING ACCESS TO ENERGY WILL “turbo-charge” growth on the continent, the International Energy Agency (IEA) says in its latest, long-range report, *Africa Energy Outlook*. It anticipates that by 2040, African electricity generation capacity will have quadrupled and that around two-thirds of Africans will have access to electricity, compared with less than one-third today.

The IEA predicts strong growth among smaller oil producers, a further reorientation of exports from Europe towards Asia and a vast boom in natural gas production. Analysts said they expect the current global oil price trough to be temporary and that the report’s analysis will hold. The implications of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in China, however, will be a concern for some countries.

The authors recommend that investment be refocused from export projects, which consumed two-thirds of investment until 2012, towards access to energy in Africa itself. One dollar invested in electricity supply can generate US\$15 of demand, they claim.

By 2040, nearly one billion people in Sub-Saharan Africa are projected to gain access to electricity, compared to 290 million today. However, anticipated population growth means that 530 million people will remain without electricity, warns the report.

Generating capacity is expected to

quadruple from 90 gigawatts in 2012 to 385GW in 2040, if annual investment of \$46 billion is mobilised. The IEA expects the power mix to diversify, particularly into coal in South Africa and hydropower in all regions. Gas consumption will grow in Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania, while geothermal energy will become more important in East Africa. The share of renewables will more than double to 44% between 2012 and 2040 and reach 170GW (from 20GW), the report says. The contribution of solar power should increase considerably, especially in Nigeria and South Africa, where it should account for more than half of the additional generation capacity from renewable sources. South Africa will also generate more wind power, which is also expected to expand in Namibia.

In East Africa, by 2040 hydropower will be the most important source of renewable energy, boosted by the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and two others which will have a collective capacity of 9.4GW. Second-most important will be geothermal energy, which Kenya has started to develop with the Olkaria power plant, funded by the European Investment Bank.

Yet it is the Grand Inga Dam on the Congo River (39GW), which the IEA’s chief economist Fatih Birol has described as the “pearl of projects”. However, the report considers that its scale, cost and complexities give rise to uncertainty

over its development. The IEA forecasts that the 4.8GW of Inga III will reach full output only by the mid 2020s, five years later than the Congo-Kinshasa government expects.

The report also warns that even if Sub-Saharan Africa remains a marginal producer of carbon dioxide, accounting for merely 3% of global emissions in 2040, it will suffer disproportionately from the impact of climate change. The IEA considers that the capacity of large hydropower projects might be affected. This could be the case for Inga, owing to the lower levels of Lakes Tanganyika and Kivu, and the reduced flow of the Ubangi River during the past decade. The damage could be even greater in the Zambezi Basin, where a 10-15% decrease in rainfall is anticipated.

The demand for biofuel across the continent should grow by 40%, exacerbating the stress on forests. Since the fuel-wood and charcoal businesses operate largely outside the formal economy (up to 80% in Tanzania), policy-makers have few levers to promote a more sustainable industry. Moreover, the large size and unregulated nature of the charcoal business can lead to criminal activity, as in Congo-Kinshasa, where it is a lucrative source of illicit income for the militias, according to the United Nations Environment Programme and Interpol.

One example of promoting sustainability comes from the Bugesera region in

Rwanda, which was completely stripped of wood in the 1980s, mainly to produce charcoal for Kigali, and which is now covered by eucalyptus trees, making Rwanda one of the few countries that has seen an increase in its forest area in recent years. The higher efficiency of improved biomass stoves can also decrease fuelwood consumption by half, says the report. Ethiopia proposes to distribute nine million improved stoves this year.

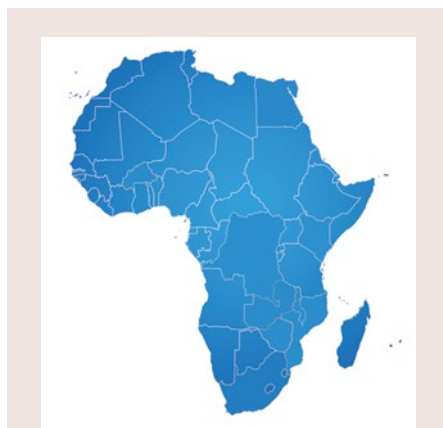
Sub-Saharan Africa will remain an important oil producer, with output rising from 5.8m barrels per day in 2013 to 6.2m bpd in 2020, but it will decline to 5.3m bpd by 2040. Nigeria's share will increase from 2.5m in 2013 to 3.1m in 2040, while Angola will remain the other big producer, although production will start declining from 2m in 2020 to 1.4m in 2040, the forecasts say.

During the period to 2020, growth will be dominated by smaller producers, such as Ghana, South Sudan and to a lesser extent Congo-Brazzaville, Mauritania and Niger. In the 2020s, Kenya and Uganda will emerge as producers but their share will then decrease. Current exporters such as Cameroon and Sudan will become net importers by 2040 if they want their refineries to keep running, while Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana and South Sudan will see production decrease.

At the same time, crude demand is expected to double to 4m bpd by 2040 and the result will squeeze the region's net contribution to the global oil balance. The US is likely to become a smaller trade partner, continuing the trend observed under the fracking boom, which saw US imports, mainly from Angola and Nigeria, fall by two-thirds to only 0.6m bpd between 2008 and 2013.

Angola will overtake Nigeria as the largest Sub-Saharan conventional oil producer, though by 2023 Nigeria should regain its lead position. Both countries' exports have been hit by the fracking boom in the US, although the effect may be mitigated by the recent fall in oil prices, which has hit investment in fracking and similar, high-cost technologies.

The IEA projects that Europe will continue to be an important market but that a larger share of African exports will go to India, China and East Asia. However, the Paris-based Agency does not account for the impact of fracking in China, the number one importer of African crude. Shale gas has been listed as a priority in



The reports on these facing pages are from UK-based **Africa Confidential** (www.africa-confidential.com), the authoritative fortnightly bulletin on Africa.

China's 2011-15 Five-Year Plan, which sets an ambitious production target of 6.5 billion cubic metres by 2015, rising to 60-100 bcm per year by 2020. As a result of fracking, Chinese imports of gas could be 30-40% lower in 2020, warn the authors of an April 2014 report, *The Development Implications of the Fracking Revolution*, sponsored by Britain's Department for International Development. Angola, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial Guinea would be the most affected by fracking in China.

Another major development is the emergence of Sub-Saharan Africa as a giant producer of natural gas. Output is expected to rise from 58 bcm in 2012 to 240 bcm by 2040, which would make it the fourth-largest producer after the Middle East, China and USA but ahead of Latin America, the Caspian Sea, Russia and Australia. This new configuration of the global gas market is particularly important for the European Union, which is keen to reduce its dependence on Russia.

Nigeria, the biggest natural gas producer in Sub-Saharan Africa, is looking forward to a projected increase of production from 41 bcm in 2012 to 85 bcm in 2040. Another giant is awakening on the East Coast: Mozambique's production should rocket from 4 bcm to 60 bcm during the period, while Angola and Tanzania will become sizeable producers, with 20 bcm each against less than 1 bcm in 2012. Besides, development of shale gas in the Karoo Basin of South Africa, which lifted the moratorium on fracking

in 2012, is projected to start in the 2020s with output rising steadily to reach 11 bcm by 2040.

Sub-Saharan Africa's gas resources will allow it to become a major supplier to world markets, with an estimated amount of 100 bcm to be exported mainly from liquefied natural gas terminals. Significantly, owing to the uncertainties created by the surge of terrorism in North Africa, the report does not even mention the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline Project between Nigeria and Algeria.

Competition will be harsh between European and Asian importers, and domestic African clients were expected to absorb more than half of production by 2040. Nigeria's Gas to Power project is an example of this strategy to prioritise domestic supply.

The scale of these developments raises questions about how quickly production can begin in East Africa, the report points out. Unlike Nigeria, which boasts several LNG terminals, the East Coast lacks infrastructure. Overall, LNG projects in East Africa should benefit from their closer proximity to the Asian markets.

The financial challenge is considerable: "Cost estimates for the first phase of upstream and LNG development in Mozambique [are] well above the country's entire annual GDP," the report notes. Yet, the IEA projects that four LNG trains and a floating LNG facility could be on stream by the end of the 2020s but warns about possible delays in implementation since the region where the LNG facilities are planned is remote, with very limited infrastructure, complicating all aspects of the construction phase.

Coal supply is expected to grow by 50% to reach 325m tonnes, including 240m from South Africa and 35m from Mozambique. Botswana, Madagascar and Zimbabwe could become important exporters but there are challenges. One is logistics. For example in Mozambique, infrastructure has proved a bottleneck.

The situation is worse for landlocked Botswana and Zimbabwe, whose mines are 1,400km away from the coast. Furthermore, most Southern African coal has high ash content and would require upgrading to cut transport costs and bring it up to international quality standards.

● See page 17: *The expansion of coal mining is imperilling South Africa's water resources.* – Ed. ■



Honours. Oz does the splits

TREATING REFUGEES WITH CONTEMPT; re-writing immigration law to override Australia's international obligations; junking the carbon tax, along with the Climate Change Authority; breaking election promises not to de-fund the public broadcaster, education and medicare; fast-tracking of dredging approvals on the Great Barrier Reef... but what nearly caused him to become unstuck was prime minister Tony Abbott's misjudgement with the Australia Day knighting of Prince Philip, a "foreign national, earl and duke".

Abbott, who reinstated knighthoods last year, has been widely lampooned for his insensitivity on the day designed to celebrate Australia – one that Aboriginal people call "invasion day".

A few days after his spectacular faux pas, his party was roundly defeated with a 12% swing in a Queensland state election. His approval rating plummeted and a fortnight later his leadership was challenged. He survived, but predictions are that he is too unpopular to lead the Libs into the next election. Labor is no doubt praying Abbott stays on to inflict more damage on his party before then.

"Exhausted cows giving double milk" was the newspaper headline on a story citing figures from Voiceless, an organisation championing the rights of animals in factory farming. While Australia's dairy cow population has been about 1.8 million for the past 30 years, annual milk production has doubled and the modern dairy cow has a horrible life, with mastitis, metabolic disorders and lameness, not to mention way less grazing land than in the past.

Voiceless was founded by South African émigré Brian Sherman and his daughter Ondine, with JM Coetzee as its founding patron.

The family's success story: Sherman emigrated in 1976 with his art-specialist wife, gallery owner Dr Gene Sherman, who received the Order of Austral-



South African émigré Brian Sherman

ia in 2010 for her cultural philanthropy and support of artists. A decade later he – with his partner, South African Laurence Freedman – raised \$US856 million from American investors for their company Equitilink, "the largest raising ever done on the US stock exchange at that point... We sold Australia to the Americans" he said. They later sold the company for \$150m.

Emile, Brian Sherman's Academy Award winning son, produced *Disgrace*, *The King's Speech* and *Rabbit Proof Fence* (an Australian classic about the cruelties visited on Aboriginal children).

Meanwhile Australia's treatment of its other would-be immigrants, the poor and disenfranchised asylum seekers, becomes ever more scandalous. Australia is the only nation that "demands the arbitrary detention of children and their families on their arrival... indefinitely, for periods exceeding a year and sometimes several years. Compare that with Britain, where asylum seekers must be released after 72 hours". So wrote former Liberal PM Malcolm Fraser in February, in a column scathingly critical of the government's asylum-seeker policy.

Peaceful resistance is taking new

forms: a Tamil asylum seeker had his deportation delayed after a protester on his plane addressed other passengers on the plight of the man in their midst. He'd told immigration officials he feared torture upon return to Sri Lanka, but was found by Australian authorities not to raise protection obligations.

"After it was explained to the passengers what was happening... two passengers stood up and refused cabin staff instructions to buckle up. They were escorted off the plane," said protester Jasmine Pilbrow.

Refugee advocates disrupted the men's final of the Australian Open tennis tournament, with banners reading "Australia Open for refugees" and "#shutdownmanus". Manus Island is home to one of Australia's offshore detention centres and in January a new immigration minister proudly declared his "absolute resolve" that asylum seekers there and in other offshore facilities would "never reach Australia". Meanwhile, two-thirds of the Manus detainees are believed to be on hunger strike and over a dozen to have sewn their lips together. Self-harm is rife, and the children on the island who were due for release at Christmas under a deal brokered with the government had not yet been released in February, said Fraser.

Although overshadowed by the prince, the selection of Rosie Batty as Australian of the Year was widely welcomed. Batty, whose young son Luke was murdered by his father, has since become an activist against domestic violence.

Is this the most sexist obituary ever published?" asked the website *Women's Agenda* when Rupert Murdoch's *The Australian* newspaper had as its opening line in the obituary of Australia's best-selling novelist, author of *The Thorn Birds*, and "national treasure" Colleen McCullough: "Plain of feature, and certainly overweight, she was nevertheless a woman of wit and warmth."

What were they thinking? ■



Excellency. Memorable memoir

HER MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID she was delighted to find herself in the midst of history. As a trained historian, she particularly appreciated the assembly of notabilities gathered to celebrate Lord Renwick's *Mission to South Africa – Diary of a Revolution*. Practically the entire cast of principal actors in those momentous times was clinking glasses recently on the High Commission lawns in Cape Town.

There were, of course, some notable absentees. The late PW Botha was not able to defend against the author's memories of curiously sinister encounters with the last apartheid president.

But FW de Klerk was present to praise the "fresh" immediacy and accuracy of Renwick's reports to Margaret Thatcher's government when he was Britain's ambassador to South Africa during those crucial years.

Mission clearly demonstrates that the two men respected each other and, after the grumpy intransigence of Botha, the envoy was relieved to be working constructively with the "calm and intelligent" De Klerk. The calm, or at least the appearance thereof, was particularly appreciated at a time when the country teetered on the brink of chaos.

The world rightly celebrates Nelson Mandela's pivotal role in rescuing peace from the jaws of bloody revolution, but Renwick's notes show that we also owe a debt to a small band of intelligent officials, many of them Afrikaner intellectuals, who made significant contributions to that resolution. Even Jacob Zuma is shown to have made mighty efforts to soothe the rivalry that tore Zulus apart. Of course, the apartheid security forces' dangerous mischief-making in Zululand didn't help either.

Renwick's speech at the book launch included admiration for Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi (who was among the party guests) for sticking to his guns in refusing to negotiate with the apartheid government unless Nelson Mandela was released.

It is interesting to read of Thatcher's sustained insistence on retaining sanctions against South Africa on the same basis: release Mandela and then we'll talk. She repeated

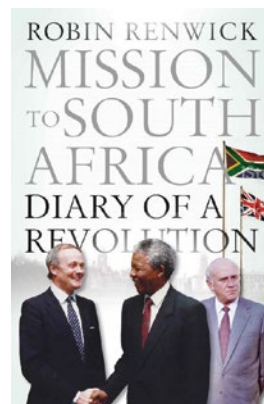
endlessly that goodness would flow from that release, and nothing else would do. She was right and she was consistent in her opinion.

Renwick was moved by Mandela's personal dignity and decency. Party loyalty sometimes obscured those qualities as ANC heavies demanded the repetition of rhetoric calling for nationalisation. And, he observes, Mandela was an innocent in regard to the economy. The British, with their significant investment in South Africa, were naturally alarmed by talk of nationalisation.

Renwick's memoirs prove that this country owes a considerable debt to Britain for acting as an honest broker when the rest of the world, including the US, refused to engage with the pariah state.

After his departure from South Africa, Renwick progressed to become Thatcher's ambassador to the United States. Unsurprisingly, this energetic and principled envoy is now Lord Renwick of Clifton. His Lordship's new book is well worth reading. ■

MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA
by Robin Renwick
(Jonathan Ball Publishers)



Robin Renwick



Unmellow yellow. Drawing the line

THERE WERE 143 ROAD DEATHS reported for the 2014 festive season – which most of us, fortunately, somehow survived. I could not wait to get the latest holiday season’s road-deaths figure; if that sounds a bit morbid and insensitive, I ask your forgiveness.

I was not looking forward to this statistic because of some research project I’d been commissioned to do, nor was I interested in its journalistic value – even though, as it has turned out, I am using it for this column. Instead, my interest was triggered by the habits of other road users in early December. (Take note that the term “road users” is employed here in the most diplomatic sense.)

The specific users I would love to see down the road, having rolled their vehicles, are the ones who come flying up behind you at breakneck speed, flashing their lights for you to give them the right of way by moving to the left of the yellow line.

Likewise, those who also approach at breakneck speed and tailgate you – of course a sign for you to make way – then come up so close that you’d think I had a bumper sticker with the Grace Jones song *Pull up to my bumper*.

Firstly I am thoroughly enjoying listening to Janis Joplin’s *Me and Bobby McGee*. Secondly I am not a speedster and, well, most of you Blue Lights Brigade wannabee’s are breaking the law. Moreover, why should I risk hitting a boulder, cow or whatever else might pop up while I’m on the yellow line giving way to you? Sorry Jack, if you’re in such a rush, overtake me on the right when you get a chance.

Besides, I hardly think the yellow line was designed to make room for some annoying law-breaking speedster flashing his lights and his “pull up to my bumper” counterpart, despite the practice having become an integral part of South Africa’s driving culture. Again, sorry that I’m not one for being trapped by culture or tradition – especially something as



idiotic as this. It’s an annoying practice indulged in by drivers who believe they own the roads.

Right after New Year I was driving to neighbouring Nelspruit and vehicles were zooming past me at breakneck speed. On the trip back to Barberton, the same. I wondered whether I’d missed something; were they driving away from some natural disaster, a hurricane, or tsunami perhaps?

Well, I was not having any of it. I con-

tinued in my determination not to be intimidated by these road hogs. After all, I was not in a rush and why should I not enjoy a nice drive, delving into my thoughts and enjoying my music or debates on the radio?

Yes, there are some who might find my refusal to give way by driving on the yellow line rude. But I’m not the one being rude. Rural roads such as we have here in Mpumalanga can be dangerous due to the many pedestrians, winding routes and, of course, the risk of stray livestock.

Kudos to the government for building a nice highway between Barberton and Nelspruit just before the 2010 World Cup. However, maybe we’d have been better off with the old road – one lane in each direction – which did not have a yellow line.

Giving way by driving inside the yellow line has become an ingrained part of South African driving culture, but I dare say it’s with good reason: when you catch a glimpse in the mirror of someone coming towards you at speed, it makes you anxious and ruins your concentration.

It gives me a real kick to hold my ground, drive at the speed limit and refuse to be intimidated into moving over on to the yellow line. Then, when we reach a stop sign or the tailgating driver eventually overtakes, he gives you a mean look as if to say “Don’t you know I’m the king of the road, get out of my way?”

Of course my reaction to this is guarded. I do not return the imposing look. Oh no, we must avoid a possible road rage incident – yet another ingrained RSA cultural practice.

Instead I sneak a look from the corner of my eye, all the while muttering f-you – with the barest movement of my lips.

● Did you have to headline my hemp-farming piece “Pipe Dream” (*nose184*)? It essentially means, yeah, pal, that will never happen. Please, we are trying to promote innovative agricultural ideas here. Work with me, will you! ■



Tuning. Glue Sister

WELL I'VE OFTEN ENOUGH IN this life stopped dead in my tracks to ask the Big One: What fchrissakes am I Doing Here? Except in boep, of course, where a great big ugly man with a badge on his hat read out exactly what I was doing there and for how long and declared he hoped next time he saw me in there it would be so I should get hung. But here I was now in Württemberg, which I'd never even heard of when I did Special German fanagalo at the university. Jawohl, so how did I get from there to studying the techniques of mural painting in Stuttgart?

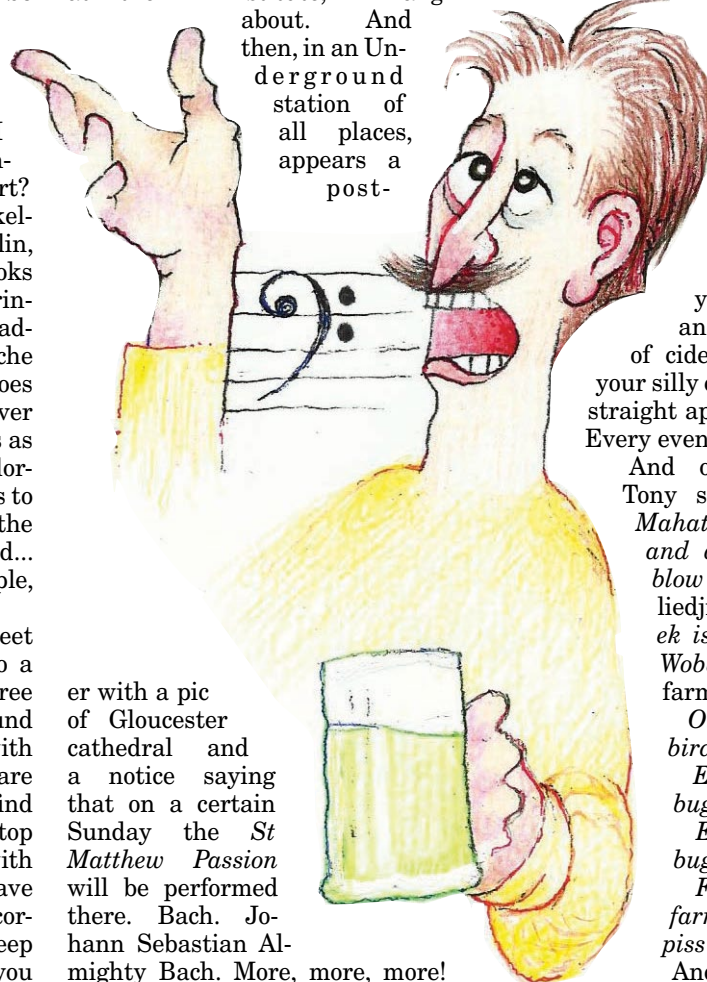
It is 1952. All still looks pretty skeletal. Stuttgart never got it like Berlin, certain buildings still stand, but it looks like Hell. Never to worry, says a crinkled-up old Herr Proffi from the Akademie, God spared us the Markuskirche and there you may see the great frescoes of the German Renaissance. Nu? Never mind the god bit, let's see if this lot is as passionate as the Giotto frescoes of Florence, hey? Hum-te-tum, I stroll across to St Mark's late on a Sunday when all the church business should be over, and... and... the place is packed with people, all silent in expectation... of what?

A couple of dozen folks with sheet music and tidy clothing troop on to a makeshift stage. They are the Three Cities Choir: Munich, Augsburg und Stuttgart. Another dozen or two with Baroque instruments follow. If they are going to make music they couldn't find a better place. This church got its top blasted off entirely by Ami B17s, with post-war money and guilt the Amis have now rigged up makeshift wood and corrugated asbestos walls and roof to keep out the rain for now and bejasus you couldn't design a more scientific sound-box for the human voice. They sing. JS Bach. The B-minor Mass.

If you want true passion you must have no sloppy art, and I tell you sloppy is not what these Germans are about. With the utmost precision they sing: *Cum sancto spiritu* – with the holy spir-

it – and a heraldic trumpet coming in at just the moment of truth fair gives me the chicken skin. A young woman next to me is openly weeping, I offer her my handkerchief. Never mind the holy bit, this, all of it, is about survival of the human spirit! I head for home drained.

Back in London I'm still a bit drained. It's a couple of weeks till I'm due back at the Institute, I hang



about. And then, in an Underground station of all places, appears a post-

er with a pic of Gloucester cathedral and a notice saying that on a certain Sunday the *St Matthew Passion* will be performed there. Bach. Johann Sebastian Al-mighty Bach. More, more, more! I shall hitch-hike to Gloucester the very next morning and pull in at the Youth Hostel, get in early on the day and find a nice pew near the musicians. And I'm off!

Early autumn in the lovely countryside, Constable countryside, and other side of Oxford I team up with a hitch-

hiking Hispanic sort of bloke name of Tony Gomes. Where are you from? say I. Glue Sister, says he, and Guyana. And you? London, say I, and South Africa. I'm going to work on a farm at a place called Chipping Norton, says he, Why don't you come along? Just like that? say I. Yeeah, says he, there's this scheme for city

people who can't afford a holiday in the country to go and help with the harvesting and you get no wages but lots of lovely grub and fresh air and free time. Okay, say I, and here we go, picking apples with about a dozen young city folks, so gaan dit mos when you're 23. Lovely exercise, and the farmer gives us jugs of cider with our supper. Not your silly city bubbly stuff, this, it is straight apple wine, green, 12% alc. Every evening is a festivity.

And one of these evenings Tony sings for us a calypso: *Mahatma Gandhi go to use and a Red Army sport done blow he fuse*. I sing a Boere liedjie: *My naam is Hans ek is vyf voet ses, my van is Wobblyou o r s*. And a local farm hand sings for us:

Oi knows where a black-bird be, Oi be going yonder, Ee be up in yonder tree, bugged if Oi don't foind ee, Ee knows Oi, Oi knows ee, bugged if Oi aint after ee, Forty year Oi worked on a farm and ee cassn't take the piss out of Oi.

And quite suddenly I go into a cold sweat and exclaim Bloody Hell! I'm supposed to be in the cathedral! Where? say all in alarm. In Glue Sister, say I, for some wonderful singing. But we're singing here, says Tony Gomes.

Ja, I suppose so, say I. Pass the cider. ■

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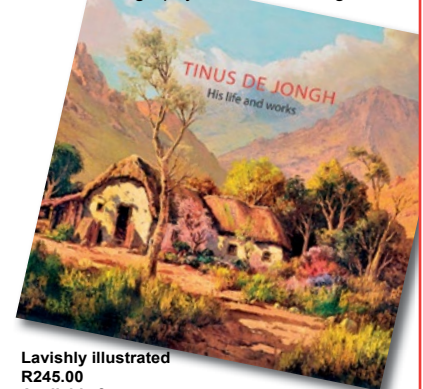
Donné Close and Camilla Kerr – I remain in awe over your achievements – so proud. Ashton

To Dylan and Colleen I love you guys lots. Stuart

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