



# *The* Villager

Issue 6 • 2020

## HOA THANKS IFV RESIDENTS

World  
Environment  
Day

The Beauty  
beneath the  
Adversity

Lockdown for Estate Agents



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The Villager focuses on Irene Farm Villages. The magazine is delivered to the home of each resident on the Estate. The magazine is co-ordinated and published by Estates in Africa (Pty) Ltd on behalf of the Home Owners' Association of Irene Farm Villages. The opinions of workers and personnel of Estates in Africa (Pty) Ltd do not necessarily reflect those of the HOA of Irene Farm Villages.

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# I am Peter Varrie

Irene Farm Villages & Centurion Golf Estate



Hi, I am Peter and I've been with Pam Golding Properties since 2013, specialising in sales in the Irene Farm Villages and Centurion Residential Estate and Country Club. In 1997, I was head hunted by a development company, sparking off successful sales of 640 stands in the Irene Farm Villages, as well as igniting my passion for Real Estate. It was only a natural progression to join Pam Golding Properties and become the area specialist for Irene Farm Villages.

Knowing the market gives me the edge to get my clients the results they are looking for. I pride myself in striving for service excellence with my buyers or sellers, going way beyond their expectations and the industry norm. I embrace every challenge I face, and give of my utmost in my personal and work life. I will stay with you from the starting point to the finish line. Get in touch and let's discuss how I can help you with your property requirements.

**Peter Varrie**

## Some words from *satisfied customers*

"I'd like to inform you of our sincere appreciation for the excellent, exceptional and extraordinary service we received from Peter Varrie of Pam Golding Properties. One Saturday morning, with no particular idea of purchasing, we went to view a property in Irene Farm Villages. That's when we first met Peter, and his incredible attitude changed our minds immediately. We decided there and then to go ahead with purchasing the property.

Although it took some time for us to get the money together, Peter was never discouraged and happily continued to assist us through to a successful purchase. Peter Varrie really is one of a kind."

**Lerato L Magagane (Purchaser)**

"Ons is nou in die pylvlak van die verkoopproses van ons eiendom. As ons terug gaan met tyd vandat jy vroeg Januarie ons kom besoek het en waar die transaksie nou staan, kan ek en Annmarie nie genoeg dank aan jou betuig vir die ongelooflike professionele diens wat jy gelever het en nog steeds doen. Telkemale het jy elke onsekerheid (wat maar baie min was) met kalmte in insig tot almal se bevrediging opgelos. Wat ook besonder waardeer word is jou intense belangstelling en ondersteuning met hierdie emosionele fase van ons lewe wat ons nou betree.

Baie dankie. Ons sal jou altyd onthou."

**Joggie & Annemarie (Seller)**



# Message from the Estate Office



Another successful donations drive.  
Photograph by Herman

## Dear Residents

With the start of the new decade at the beginning of this year no one foresaw or even knew that we would find ourselves amid the COVID-19 pandemic and under lockdown. Many questions were asked as the lockdown period progressed, week after week, month after month. Why us? Why this generation?

How have you coped during the lockdown time and how have you survived? Did the rat-race come to an unexpected halt for you? Then suddenly you find yourself in a position, not knowing how to gear down to a slower pace or how to take a detour in your daily routine? Did you learn or experience something new? Whatever your story may be, I trust that it will end with health and prosperity.

The Homeowners' Association (HOA) was also faced with new challenges. Apart from the general HOA regulations and rules that required compliance, the residents now also had to adhere to the COVID-19 regulations. For the HOA, it was and is still challenging to respond to all the enquiries the HOA receives regarding the enforcement of the COVID-19 Regulations, which clearly are the duty of the authorities to enforce. At



At van Niekerk

times, it was a question of interpretation. Nevertheless, due to the nature of the COVID-19 Regulations, the HOA and Security had to deal with complaints coming from our residents, which were new of nature, some being:

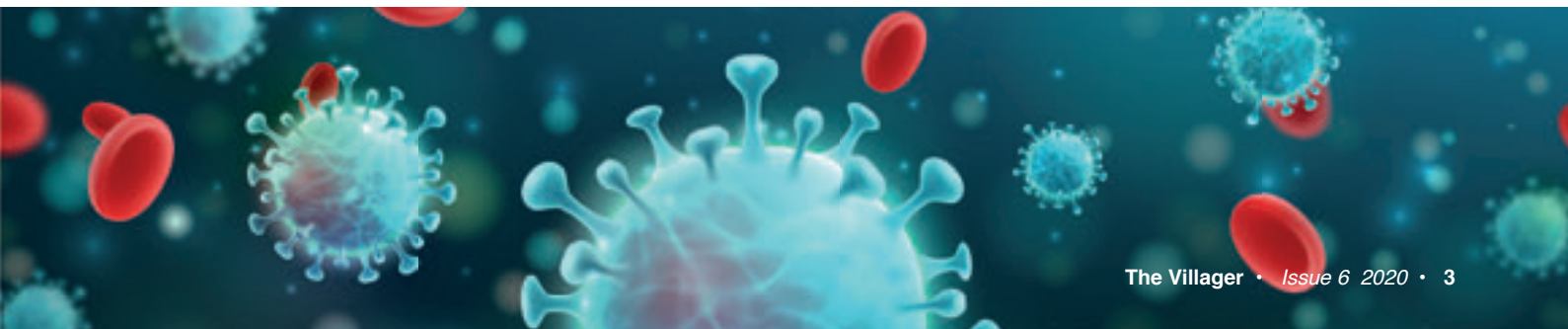
- Amongst the many people that were walking, jogging or cycling, there were many dogs not on leashes.
- Dog poo was not removed.
- People were spitting on the road.
- There was incessant barking of dogs, mainly caused by the dogs being left at home and not taken for walks.

- People were not wearing their masks.
- Social distancing was ignored.
- Contractors, who did not do essential repair work, were seen on the estate.
- Live-in gardeners were hopping around and working at other properties.
- Live-in domestic workers were also working at other houses.
- Deliveries and collections were recorded individually.

However, in general, the HOA received great support from the residents, whom we would like to thank for their co-operation.

The donation programme for the needy was well supported by our residents. The Social Support Team emptied the bins at the two gates regularly. They also attended to the packing of the goods, including groceries, toiletries, clothing, etc. We will have full feedback from the team in the next issue of *The Villager*.

Bidvest Protea Coin, the Security Service Provider for the HOA, issued all of the security officers with masks, which they must always wear when on duty. We would also like to thank the residents who donated masks and food to the Security. You are once again reminded that any kind of donation to the security personnel, either to



the group or an individual, must be recorded as part of the Security protocol.

On 1 June 2020, South Africa moved to the Alert Level 3 Lockdown, which allowed for the HOA office to reopen. With the reopening of the office, several rules will apply in accordance with the COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Policy and the Workplace plan. The HOA staff and all residents must comply with these rules, which include the following:

- All visitors to the office, as well as the office staff, must wear masks (no mask, no access).
- All visitors must complete and sign the attendance or visitors' register, which will be at the office front door.
- Visitors must sanitise their hands before entering the office and again upon leaving the office.
- No handshaking will be allowed, and social distancing must always be maintained.
- The temperature of the office staff will be taken daily and recorded.
- Any positive virus infection will be reported along the prescribed official channels.

The HOA will go out of its way to ensure that residents and visitors who must visit the HOA's office will be safe. However, this can only be achieved with the cooperation of everyone. It is recommended that you rather phone the office with your query, before visiting the office. Maybe your query can be resolved over the phone.

Some of the staff members were working from home to ensure that the HOA was functional during lockdown. Other staff had to stay home, one being Nomthi, who shares her experience and view on the lockdown in an essay published in this issue. Residents are likewise invited to share their experiences and photos with us.

Mr Ducius Themba (46) was recently appointed as the new Shift Manager at Irene Farm Villages. Ducius has been with Bidvest Protea Coin for 15 years. He has received security specialist training, as well as training in advanced firefighting, basic first aid and shift management. He was deployed at several sites, namely at SARS and Time Square Casino in Pretoria. Ducius is married with five children and stays in Mamelodi.

The collection of the recyclables on Thursdays will continue during the lockdown period. Remade Recycling that does the collection gave feedback on the monthly volumes for 2020, i.e.

January : 11 470kg

February: 9 950kg

March: 5 870kg

April: 9 260kg.

Remember the green bins or bags on a Thursday morning. The collection team are sometimes early in the estate, therefore put the bags out before 7am.

You are reminded of World Environment Day that took place on 5 June. The article about this by Remade Recycling makes interesting reading.

Our Accredited Estate Agents were invited to send us a narrative/essay on how they experienced the lockdown. We would like to share the articles from Peter Varrie of the Pam Golding Group, Steven Kruger from Leap Frog, Melanie Burrell from Apple Properties and Giselle from RM Realtors with you. One thing is clear, although with their backs to the wall and the property market slumping to a historic low, they are now ready to help sellers and buyers.

Hopefully the country will move to Levels 2 and 1 soon, which will bring life back to normality. We trust that the children will enjoy their return to school and stay safe and healthy.

As we are wondering how and what the future will be, the words of Michael Kami come to mind:

"The very best way to create the future, is to create it."

Best regards,

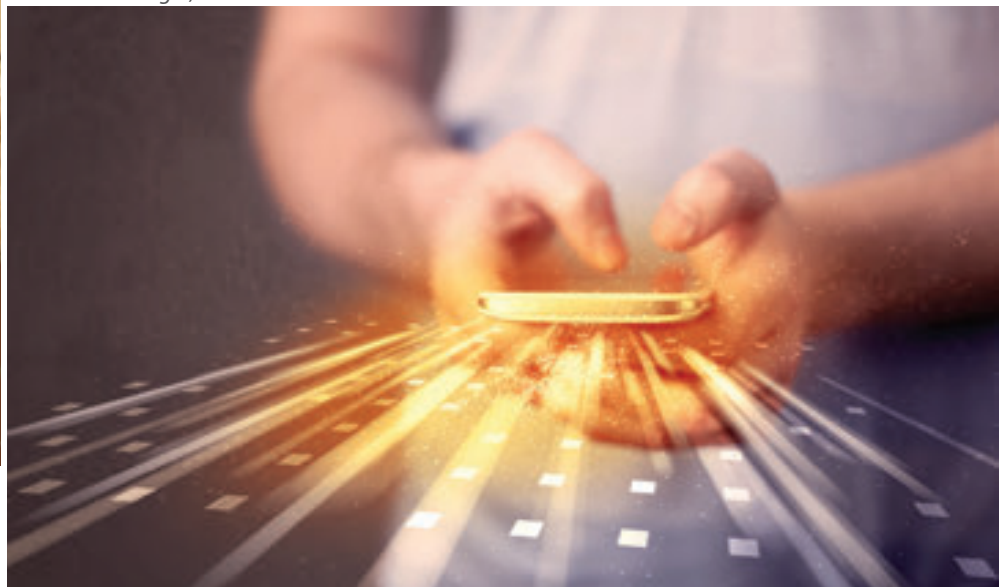
*Estate Management*



Hand sanitiser at the HOA office



New Shift Manager, Ducius Themba





# THE BEAUTY BENEATH THE ADVERSITY

BY NOMTHI CEBEKHULU

**A**t the beginning of this year I wrote an article titled *2020: The Year That Was*. In that article I shared thoughts on how I believed that this year would unfold and how I envisioned that this year would end. Looking back at that article and comparing it to where we as humanity find ourselves now, I am reminded of just how unpredictable life is.

In the above-mentioned article I had spoken of a number of possible scenarios that could unfold during this year – joy at the possible successes and achievements and some sadness at the possibility of encountering losses and significant challenges along the way as well. Nothing could have prepared me for the emergence of the Coronavirus, though . . . nothing!

The COVID-19 experience is one that has required major adjustments in the way that we go about our daily lives and it has also made it necessary for us to adjust our minds so that we may be able to cope with this new reality that confronts us so brazenly.

Not all is lost, though. Some of the most beautiful characteristics of human nature have become more illuminated by the presence of this pandemic and it is witnessing these characteristics that has made me more aware of how dynamic we as human beings are.

I have seen people go out of their way to lend a hand to those who are worst affected by this virus. I have heard of single parents who have been juggling the tasks of working from home, educating their children, feeding their families and keeping their homes clean and functioning during the lockdown.



I still continue to hear the sound of children's laughter and the singing of the early birds in the mornings. I know of friends who are 'holding each other's hands' through this experience regardless of the distance between them. I hear of families who have been using this time to reconnect with each other and to discover who each member of the family has become during the hustle and bustle that is normal life.

Yes, some are faced with dire situations financially and are also uncertain about what the future has in store for them. Be that as it may, I am also seeing a certain level of resourcefulness emerging from their desperate situations. I am witnessing the creation of new businesses which address the needs that this pandemic has given birth to and I am also seeing young people coming up with creative ways of making a living. I am seeing a true reflection of the beauty and the resilience of the human spirit and I am grateful to be alive at such a historical time as this.

I have discovered some valuable things about myself as well during this time of lockdown; I have learnt that I have a passion for cooking and have been acquiring knowledge on how food can be used as medicine. I have also picked up the habit of exercising and I am educating myself about health and fitness. Being at home has also reminded me of my love for reading and I have been blissfully diving from one book into another. The time alone has also been helpful in terms of creating a chance for me to be introspective and take stock of my life – this has allowed me to realign myself with my goals and to clear my life of unnecessary distractions that could hinder my growth and progress.

This pandemic is teaching me a lot of significant things, not just about myself but about us as humanity as well. I am learning that we are all inter-connected; the Coronavirus has shown me how the existence of one person depends on the existence of another. I am learning that with unity comes the possibility of overcoming life's most difficult challenges. I am seeing a light at the end of this tunnel. I am seeing our ability to overcome.

I am seeing the beauty beneath the adversity . . .

(The views expressed in this article are those of Nomthi Cebekhulu and are not the views of the HOA as a whole.)



## LOCKDOWN 2020

BY PETER VARRIE

As I write this article for *The Villager* towards the end of May, I cannot but reflect as to how this COVID-19 virus has turned our lives upside down. At present, I am supposed to be riding a three-day mountain bike event at Prince Albert in the Karoo and two weeks ago I was supposed to be in Montenegro for the Pam Golding Gold Club conference. However, these issues are non-events, compared to the way many people's lives have been turned upside down and, in some cases, financially destroyed.

Obviously, like most people, I haven't been able to work and now that all the cupboards and drawers in the house have been cleaned and tidied, my days have largely been spent on training and motivational webinars, instead of being able to spend face time with all of our clients.

PGP has been very proactive in reacting to the changing circumstances and we



have pioneered virtual online showhouses of the properties that we are marketing. This has proven to be very effective and will probably replace the old conventional 'showhouses' which were traditionally held on Sunday afternoons.

It is difficult to predict what the situation will be once this issue of *The Villager* is distributed. Hopefully, life will have returned to a degree of normality and Estate Agents will be able to market houses in the more conventional manner. Unfortunately, there is no doubt that property prices will be under severe pressure because of the financial constraints that many people will be finding themselves under and the need to sell their properties because of affordability and financial difficulties.

Should you find yourself in such a situation, please remember that PGP works very closely with all the banks that have a Distressed Sale programme. Banks do not want to repossess or auction properties when their bondholders encounter financial difficulties and they are prepared to work closely with property owners who find themselves in such a situation and will assist them to enrol on the programme. They are very accommodating and will write off considerable amounts of arrears or come to generous arrangements in respect of repayment shortfalls once the house has been sold.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss the Distressed Sale programme – this will be done in the strictest of confidence.

However, it is not all gloom and doom, the repo rate is currently at the lowest level since 1998, which will certainly give relief to bondholders. For those who are bold, there will certainly be opportunities to purchase properties at a substantial discount.

## LEAPFROG PROPERTY GROUP

BY STEVEN KRUGER

The COVID-19 crisis shows us that it is possible to make transformational changes overnight. These crisis moments present opportunities in many ways going forward. Our property business has changed to a renewed emphasis on technology and digitalisation.

As a result of our curbed trading activity during lockdown, physical viewings of properties are still prohibited. Estate Agents will be prevented from showing properties until Level 2 is reached. As an industry, we have come together and are lobbying hard to bring it up to Level 3, but whether this will be allowed is yet to be determined.

Last month the SA Reserve Bank brought forward its Monetary Policy Committee meeting and cut the repo rate by 100 basis points for the second time in as many months and we expect further adjustments. Interest rate cuts have now stimulated the attention of buyers. Sellers will eventually drop prices to a point where buyers are incentivised to purchase again, which could lead to



the market rectifying itself through a possible housing boom later.

New transactions are taking longer to be processed and finalised. We are dependent on subsidiary services like the Deeds Office and Municipality which so far have become active again with only a third of the workforce.

### BUYERS

Online internet browsing for properties is the evident future. Buyers will do virtual viewings of the properties available on all internet portals. High definition videos, virtual tours and professional photos will assist in making a purchase decision. Many buyers are looking for properties with office space or a study to set up work from home offices.

Buyers need to be financially pre-qualified with home loan consultants or banking institutions and provide the pre-qualification certificates. Sellers are requesting the financial position of potential buyers before they agree to allow them to access their property for a physical viewing due to the potential risks involved with COVID-19.

### SELLERS

Sellers wanting to put a property on the market should use this time to do all the necessary maintenance, in order to maximise the opportunity to help your Leapfrog Agent sell your property faster.

Sellers need to be patient and realistic about their asking price if they want to close a sale after the lockdown period is over.

The overall property market in this unprecedented time is expected to emerge from the lockdown with a 'perfect storm' for home buyers who are eagerly waiting and have plenty of motivation to take advantage of market conditions.



# APPLE PROPERTY CONNECTION

BY MELANIE BURRELL

This was not a vacation... it was not special leave that any of us applied for, prepared for or chose, to get that list of chores done. We did not plan and save for this. None of us did. This has been the most challenging and (for many) traumatic thing that has happened to the world in living memory.

What now? How do we navigate this new road going forward? What will life look like when the lockdown is lifted? Where and how do we begin to pick up the pieces and venture back out into the real world?

This was not even just a 'South African' thing... the whole world has changed, stopped, shifted...

We've had to learn to navigate a very confusing and uncertain world of restrictions, rules (changing constantly), face masks, gloves and sanitisers, while confined to our homes, devoid of routine and the everyday busyness that is our reality, all the while trapped in an exhausting uncertainty of what if I "get



it"? When can I go back to work? Will I get paid this month? How do we keep our businesses afloat? Pay staff? How will we afford to pay rent/insurance/car payments/school fees, and/or buy groceries, toiletries? How will we make ends meet? Survive?

The stress, whether acknowledged or not, has taken its toll on our mental state, our energy levels, our sleep and sleep patterns, and on our relationships. Deprived of our daily routines, exercise, freedom to move and be as we choose, to do as we like when we like... many have experienced a shutdown, an exhaustion that cannot be logically accounted for, an apathy, a lethargy, with a part of our being wanting (demanding even) that we

"get up and get going" and the other part sabotaging at every turn with food, movies, naps and just checking out, scrolling mindlessly through social media, with a feeling of disconnection.

No one has been immune to the COVID-19 virus. In some shape or form, this virus has impacted each and every one of us. The world we live in will never be the same again.

How will you choose to step out of this lockdown? With a backpack of fear, anxiety, hostility, anger, resentment, resistance and rage, feeling hard done by and deprived... or will you choose to emerge with a sense of wonder, curiosity, awe at the outpouring of kindness and connection we have seen and experienced over the past weeks, with a backpack of gratitude, humility, tolerance, courage, faith and love, topped with kindness and empathy for our fellow men and women...?

Whatever your conclusion, please make sure that you continue to stay safe!

## RM REALTORS

BY GISELLE



The current international lockdown has stirred many emotions across the country - we are all facing so many trials and tribulations. Unfortunately it's something none of us saw coming nor planned for. My experience during this lockdown has been challenging but I am nothing but grateful for everything I have and that my family is safe and healthy.

I am a real estate agent with RM Realtors and going from a fast-paced lifestyle to completely being homebound has been difficult. I love my job - it's my passion to help people find their dream homes.

Home is where the heart is, which is another reason why I would have loved to have worked during this lockdown. What better time to find your dream home,

move in and spend your first days and weeks enjoying it in quarantine! At least my time has been spent on following up leads, speaking to clients and arranging viewings as soon as our lockdown ends.

I can't wait to get going as it has been quite monotonous. During this quarantine period, I have learnt that self-motivation and discipline are vital and we should help each other by keeping one another inspired as much as we can. This time may feel tedious and wasted but we all have the power to make sure we use it effectively. Staying positive is imperative. Hopefully, everything will soon go back to normal.

I will never again take anything for granted, and would like to look back on this time with no regrets.

Here are a few things I have learnt and am so grateful for:

- My friends - I can't wait to see them and hug them and appreciate their value and presence in my life.
- My health and my family's health - time and health are everything, very valuable, more than earthly wealth.

I will never again take for granted the ability to visit friends and family, go out for dinner to restaurants, walk with the dogs or go on holiday.

Tell people that you love them and appreciate their presence in your life.

Stay safe everyone. I am looking forward to meeting new clients and friends after this lockdown.



# IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

## Summary Income Statement – April 2020

	April 2020		Year to Date		YTD Variance	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Value	%
<b>Operational Income</b>						
Levy Income	1 166 332	1 166 333	2 274 487	2 274 488	(1)	0.0%
Other Income	42 892	32 500	223 299	185 300	37 999	20.5%
	<b>1 209 224</b>	<b>1 198 833</b>	<b>2 497 786</b>	<b>2 459 788</b>	<b>37 998</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Operational Expenditure</b>						
Professional /Administration	103 697	73 216	165 786	148 432	(17 354)	-11.7%
Accounting and Auditing	41 237	41 237	82 474	84 474	2 000	2.4%
Insurance, Legal and Admin	62 460	31 979	83 312	63 958	(19 354)	-30.3%
General Office	1 377	10 306	6 961	20 612	13 651	66.2%
Office Administration	1 377	10 306	6 961	20 612	13 651	66.2%
Operational Expenses	202 524	232 724	404 583	455 448	50 865	11.2%
Municipal Charges	31 941	47 400	72 778	94 800	22 022	23.2%
General Operations	19 908	21 003	29 816	42 006	12 190	29.0%
Salaries & Wages	150 674	164 321	301 988	318 642	16 654	5.2%
Security	461 098	492 461	903 651	956 938	53 287	5.6%
Security Operations	52 021	67 004	58 659	134 318	75 659	56.3%
Guarding Services	421 790	421 257	843 580	814 220	(29 360)	-3.6%
Insurance Claims and Excess	(12 713)	4 200	1 413	8 400	6 987	83.2%
Repairs & Maintenance	9 195	177 571	165 566	351 342	185 776	52.9%
Repairs & Maintenance	9 195	41 310	29 305	78 820	49 515	62.8%
Park Maintenance Contract	0	136 261	136 261	272 522	136 261	50.0%
	<b>777 891</b>	<b>986 278</b>	<b>1 646 547</b>	<b>1 932 772</b>	<b>286 225</b>	<b>14.8%</b>
<b>Operating Profit / (Loss)</b>	<b>431 333</b>	<b>212 555</b>	<b>851 238</b>	<b>527 016</b>		
Non-Recurring Revenue	(2 235)	0	1 805	0	1 805	100.0%
Non-Recurring Expenses	300	50 200	18 618	100 400	81 782	81.5%
Net Positive/ (Negative)	(2 535)	(50 200)	(16 813)	(100 400)	(79 977)	
<b>Net Profit / (Loss)</b>	<b>428 798</b>	<b>162 355</b>	<b>834 425</b>	<b>426 616</b>		

*“When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills.”*

– Chinese proverb

## IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

### Summary Levy Statements – April 2020

	120+ Days	90 Days	60 Days	30 Days	Current	Total	Previous Month
Normal - Self Pay	-	-	673	9 637	-273 649	-263 339	-316 642
Normal - Debit Order	-	-	-	-	-6 888	-6 888	-8 727
	-	-	673	9 637	-280 537	-270 227	-325 369
Debt Collection - AA (30/60 days)	166 724	31 580	37 300	50 425	49 406	335 435	99%
Debt Collection - JJR (90+ days)	174 455	12 497	12 913	37 880	11 725	249 469	74%
Debt Collection - KSB (90+ days)	4 589	2 998	2 980	3 106	3 013	16 686	5%
Sold - Previous Owner Accounts	-	-	-	-	-55 577	-55 577	-56 515
In Transfer	-	-	-	2 544	-2 814	-269	-9 026
Other	830	-	60 810	95	1 535	63 270	64 705
	<b>346 598</b>	<b>47 074</b>	<b>114 677</b>	<b>103 688</b>	<b>-273 248</b>	<b>338 788</b>	<b>60.7%</b>
Debt Collection - Accounts > R200,000	1 111 198	-153 616	15 605	28 736	10 199	1 012 122	2.6%
	<b>1 457 795</b>	<b>-106 542</b>	<b>130 282</b>	<b>132 424</b>	<b>-263 050</b>	<b>1 350 910</b>	<b>12.8%</b>
							<b>1 197 152</b>

We can unfortunately see the impact of COVID-19 with a reduction in collections in April/ May compared to previous months. Compared to last month, the number of accounts owing more than 3 months increased from 17 to 22; 60 days - from 28 to 31; 30 days - from 55 to 58. Concern is on current, where 196 members have not paid by the 7th compared to 180 in prior months. Account Ability and the Estate Management are continuously driving collections to ensure adequate cash flow to fulfil the HOA obligations. 75% of the increase of the outstanding amount (excluding those accounts over R200 000) came from members overdue for April and May.

## Irene Farm Villages Home Owners Association - Capital/ Development Projects

	Current Stage	Current Status	Approved Budget	Actual Spend To Date	Available Budget
Infrastructure Development	Planning		8 797 910	690 861	8 107 049
Security Upgrade Project	Define		1 700 000	1 583 234	116 766
<b>Total</b>			<b>10 497 910</b>	<b>2 274 095</b>	<b>8 223 815</b>

## Account Ability

Office Address:  
Sovereign Drive,  
Route 21  
Corporate Park

Accounting  
Office Hours  
8:00 to 13:00  
Monday to Friday

Office Tel: 082 780 0059

Accounts Email:  
accounts@aams.co.za

IFV Accounts:  
Winnie Boshoff

Summary Income  
Statement by  
Account Ability



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# CREATING AN INDOOR GARDEN

BY BEV HERMANSON

An indoor succulent garden is fun to put together and easy to refresh from time to time, given that succulents can survive without too much attention and little water.

What I love about indoor gardening is that you can change the design and variety of plants as many times as you like without too much effort, provided you have a good supply of succulents in your outdoor flower beds. A miniature garden is also great for the kids – they can make a forest, a fairy garden or a wildlife bush camp – and if everything dies, they can start something new. Often the withered succulents will bounce back when they are planted outdoors again, and if they don't, there's normally plenty more to choose from, with a new look to match each season of the year.

## WHERE TO START

1. Equipment can include a sturdy sieve, various plastic containers, a plastic spoon, a small brush, an old metal fork, a spike for opening up the soil and a small jug for adding water – and of course the container that will be used for the garden.

2. Ingredients: compost, fine sand (eg. sandpit sand), small stones, ornaments such as semi-precious stones, sea shells, small figurines.







**STEP 1.** Sieve the compost, keeping the rough residue separate. Place the rough sticks and leaves on the bottom of the garden container and cover with the fine compost. Add water and leave for about 20 minutes for the compost to absorb the moisture. Cover with the sand.



**STEP 2.** Go in search of suitable small plants in your garden. It's preferable to choose baby succulents that already have some roots.



**STEP 3.** Plant in groups, with an accent plant on one side of your garden.



**STEP 4.** Add small stones and decorations.  
And voila! You have your new indoor garden ready to brighten up your dining room table or bathroom décor.

**RECOMMENDED:** Use a syringe and small bowl of water for watering your miniature garden. Succulents do not like too much water, so be sure to test the moisture content of your soil before watering.







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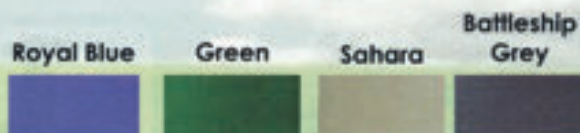
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# WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

## You can make a Difference

Having recently celebrated World Environment Day on 5 June 2020, and with the entire world in the midst of a pandemic that has everyone indoors safeguarding their health, we find ourselves with an opportune moment to consider our impact on the environment and what we can do to protect it.

**F**or almost 50 years, World Environment Day has served as a time for countries to raise awareness about vital causes and this year the focus was on biodiversity. This is a particularly noteworthy topic, given that we have never before been privy to such widespread awareness of our impact on the Earth. Previously, fewer people knew that our use of the planet had significantly changed 75% of the land surface, left two thirds of the oceans in a dire state, and reduced our wetlands to a mere 15%. But during the outbreak of COVID-19, social and traditional media flooded the world with the positive impact that staying indoors and halting industrial processes has had.

As a result, much of the world has seen tangible evidence through the decreased air pollution, lowered greenhouse gas emissions, and cleaner beaches and rivers. It showed us how resilient the Earth is and collectively we breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed as though something good was coming from a situation so dire. However, there is more to this story and we need to be aware of the whole truth before we relax.

### THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY

In spite of these positive environmental effects, there has also been a negative impact on the waste industry that we need to be aware of. For starters, the almost global lockdown has resulted in major increases in organic household waste, medical waste, and single use plastic and plastic bags. Additionally, the suspension of some recycling programmes has also severely impacted our waste industry, an effect that was exacerbated when reclaimers were unable to operate in South Africa due to the countrywide lockdown.

Reclaimers sort through waste to find and sell recyclable material and are estimated to collect a staggering 90%

of our discarded packaging and paper. Without their integral work there has been an increase in waste to landfill and a decrease in recyclable material to mills for the manufacturing of packaging for the food and pharmaceutical industries, among others.

Says Michella Basel, Marketing and PR for Remade Recycling, "While it is encouraging to see how the planet is reviving itself, there are two sides to every coin. In addition to the human suffering brought about by the pandemic, there have also been inadvertent negative impacts on the environment which we must address so that our planet can continue to heal."





### CONTINUING AN UPWARD TRAJECTORY IN OUR HOMES

We have the power to help the planet heal. Unfortunately, in spite of wanting to do the right thing and take responsibility for our consumption and recycling habits, it can be difficult to do so in a way that is sustainable. We can help with this by offering practical tips and advice on how to recycle in your home and office. In honour of World Environment Day, and particularly during these COVID-19 times while most of us are stuck indoors, it seems that the home is the best place to start.

Recycling is a powerful way to prevent pollution, save energy, and conserve natural resources – and it's an activity that the whole family can participate in.

### 5 TIPS TO MAKE RECYCLING IN YOUR HOME AND OFFICE EASIER DURING LOCKDOWN

1. **Talk to your kids:** Introduce the language and habits of doing the recycling from a young age and regularly point out what you're doing whenever you recycle.
2. **Make it easy:** Children (and adults) are more likely to do it if it's convenient, so put fun, marked recycling boxes in their bedrooms, bathroom, and kitchen.
3. **Be creative:** Get your children invested in the process by decorating the recycling bins however they want, even if a bunny-robot-rainbow theme clashes with your décor.
4. **Strategic shopping:** Shop at bulk stores or shops that sell refills – and don't forget your reusable bags (and your mask).
5. **Home deliveries:** Home and office deliveries are on the rise, so don't forget to recycle cardboard and brown paper packaging.
6. **White paper:** This is recycled into tissue which is converted into a range of sanitary products, so make sure to recycle your white paper, whether it's your kids' used paper or office paper.
7. **Discarding disposables:** Masks and gloves must be recycled through formal waste collection systems, rather than littering or leaving them in public places.

### CELEBRATE WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY EACH YEAR

Each household has the power to join World Environment Day and do its part to close the loop on waste, create a more sustainable circular economy, and positively impact our environment. Together, we can make a real difference and restore our planet for future generations to enjoy.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Remade Recycling has a proven track record of providing a variety of customisable waste management solutions, including residential estate recycling, onsite waste management, office recycling, event waste management, hazardous waste management, confidential shredding, site or office clear-outs, and more.

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# BONFIRE

BY JAMES CLARKE

In my Nature article last month, I referred to sunsets but did not mention the one I witnessed on May 7 1945 – 75 years ago. The most memorable of my life.

I was a child in England at the time. We waited for the sun to set because we were going to light the biggest bonfire any of us would ever witness. It was to celebrate 'VE Day' - Victory in Europe, the end of World War 2 in the West.

That evening, after five years of war and bombing, we were suddenly able to turn on our house lights without first blacking out all the windows. Street lights were turned on. Motorists were able to peel off the masks from their headlights (only a narrow slit of light was allowed until then). Shops could light up their windows.

The BBC played Vera Lynn singing, "When the lights go on again all over the world", incessantly. But at least we children now realised the full significance of the words.

Up until that point in our lives we had known only total darkness at night relieved sometimes by the red glow of burning towns and the strobe-like flashes of anti-aircraft guns and probing searchlight beams.

Kids were brought up to view lights at night as a threat to our lives. One silly mistake (I was assured), like turning on my bedroom light, could bring German

bombers roaring over from Schleswig-Holstein to flatten our houses. And it would be MY FAULT.

I was scared of the dark and scared of the light.

There was indescribable excitement in our village. Flags and bunting appeared everywhere, along with pictures of Field Marshal Montgomery and Winston Churchill.

The Yellow Six of the 1st Streetly Boy Scouts, of which I was (and I say this with all modesty) the L\*E\*A\*D\*E\*R, built the bonfire. We felled dead trees and collected hundreds of now unwanted wooden blackout frames and anything else combustible.

In a field, we built this mother of all bonfires, two storeys high. It was a work of architecture as well as engineering. People have received knighthoods for less heroic structures. We had to borrow a really long ladder to climb to the top so we could add even more fuel.

From every kitchen in the village arose the most delicious aromas: apple pies, rabbit and chicken pies, fairy cakes, pancakes. One ton of hoarded rations were whipped up, kneaded, mashed, stirred, mixed, blended, boiled, baked, fried and taken in solemn procession to the Great Fire.

Salivating freely, we could barely wait for dark, and, in the painfully slow dusk the lights went on all the way down our

road. People left their curtains open and some even found coloured globes to light the outside of their homes.

Villagers began to troop up the rise and gather round the towering bonfire. We ceremoniously lit it and a great beacon of light lit up the countryside.

It was a pity about the ladder. I forgot to retrieve it.

People were singing, "There'll always be an England". Then, suddenly, the village air raid sirens began wailing. Everybody stopped in mid-frolic expecting to hear the throb of bombers. My mother said to my father, "I told you the Germans weren't happy about signing that 'unconditional surrender' thing."

My father, an air raid warden, said, "It's a practical joke for Pete's sake!" But two other wardens came over and my mother harangued them: "Do your duty!" she cried in a piercing falsetto 'Rule Britannia' sort of way.

The sirens persisted.

The three wardens marched off into the night to seek the practical joker at the wardens' post. We watched them, dimly, skirting the field and swinging into the road. Some prankster, lurking in the trees, then let off three military thunder flashes. Bang! Bang! Bang!

"They've been shot!" somebody said.

My mother said: "Who's for fresh pancakes?"

The war had hardened us all.



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## PHOTOGRAPHY

### LOOKING FOR A PHOTOGRAPHER?

See my portfolio here at [www.ivanmullerphotography.com](http://www.ivanmullerphotography.com). If you like what you see, contact Ivan at 082 454 8487 or [ivanmuller@icon.co.za](mailto:ivanmuller@icon.co.za). I have a large format photo quality inkjet printer that can print on canvas and fine art paper up to size A0. I am also available for any type of location photography.

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## HOME SERVICES, BUILDING & MAINTENANCE

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