



The

Villager

Issue 8 • 2020

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAKING GOOD PROGRESS

2020 AGM
postponed

CODEBREAKERS:
Redefining eLearning

The Elephants of Thula Thula

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Publisher

Nico Maritz
E-mail: nico@eiapublishing.co.za

Editor

Bev Hermanson
E-mail: bev@eiapublishing.co.za

Sales Manager & Advertising

Martin Fourie - Cell: 072 835 8405
E-mail: martin@eiapublishing.co.za
Office: 012 997 2712

Sales

Frans Meyer - Cell: 072 267 3141
E-mail: fransm@nowmedia.co.za

Production Co-ordinator

Chris Grant
E-mail: chrsg@nowmedia.co.za

Graphic Design

Diane van Noort
E-mail: d2vn@mweb.co.za

ESTATES IN AFRICA (PTY) LTD HEAD OFFICE:

Tel: 011 327 4062
32 Fricker Road, Illovo, Johannesburg
www.eiapublishing.co.za

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Dear Residents

This year we experienced one of the coldest winters in many years if not in a decade. This was particularly noticeable on several plants in the parks, which were severely damaged by the frost in mid-June, amongst them protea trees, agapanthus and, especially, the strelitzias at the North Gate circle. Time will tell whether the younger trees will

survive. Halfway through winter, on 11 July, South Africa was gripped by one of its coldest winter days. The horticulturists will argue that we need the very cold winters from time to time to kill all the unwanted insect plagues, which I support.

The veld areas are very dry, and residents are requested to be careful not to cause veld fires.



At van Niekerk

The Garden Creations team got stuck into the parks on their return after the lockdown in June and managed to clean and tidy the parks by the end of the month. A special word of appreciation is extended to the whole team. The garden team has since started the winter programme with Duke Park first on the list. The existing pathway in the park was redesigned to allow for a short walkway of about 500m through the park, from

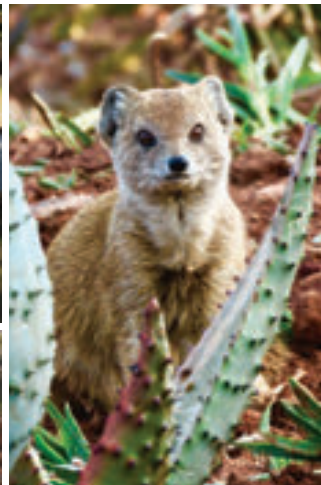
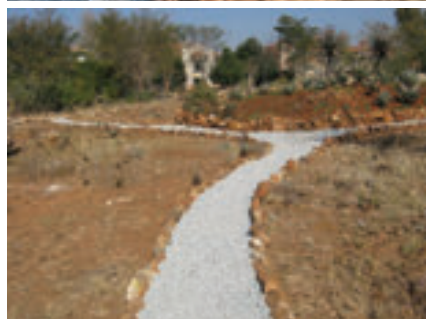
where you can view the natural veld area and the many indigenous plants; enjoy the presence of a mongoose colony; and see the thick-kneed plover pair (Dikkop). Residents are invited to take a stroll through the park – however, cycling will not be allowed in this park, because of the small animal and bird life found here.

Talking finances, one has no choice but to look at the economic impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the South African economy. Matters are looking rotten. All over, big and small businesses are implementing dramatic cuts in their capital expenditures. Manufacturing data released recently shows the largest decline since 2009, whilst the jobless statistics are the highest ever in the modern history of South Africa. With this as background, the Board of Directors must deal with a unique economic situation, which has a direct impact on the financial position of the Home Owners' Association. One of the major challenges will be to ensure that the Association, as a non-profit company, will always have enough funds at its disposal

Before



After



so that the operational expenditures are met, for example security, salaries, garden and park maintenance, municipal rates and taxes, and water and electricity usage. To achieve this goal, the Board has already suspended most of the capital expenditures for the current financial year, which ends in February 2021. This is one of the important matters that will be addressed at the next Annual General Meeting. The finances of the HOA display a healthy fiscal situation, which is set out in the financial statement published in this issue. Members are welcome to send any enquiry or input to the Estate Manager, who will share it with the HOA's Financial Committee.

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will probably have to be postponed. In anticipation of these current circumstances, the HOA has applied at the Companies Tribunal for the postponement of the AGM to November 2020. Members will be kept updated as the situation unfolds.

The project for the upgrading of the two gatehouses, better known as the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP), is progressing. The Bill of Quantities (BOQ) has been finalised and nine building construction companies were invited to tender. They all met on site on 1 July 2020 with the Quantity Surveyor, Mr Kelvin Nemacha, who is the principal agent on behalf of the HOA. The final appointment of the building contractor should be concluded during August 2020, where after the Board of Directors will decide when construction will start, taking into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the Board has taken the decision to commence building, residents will be informed of the plan schedule and what to expect during the construction period. One thing is certain, there will be disruption of the traffic flow through the gates during this period. However, just imagine yourself arriving at one of the gatehouses and driving through it without getting soaking wet after using your finger to gain access during a thunderstorm. A better equipped control room will also form part of this development.

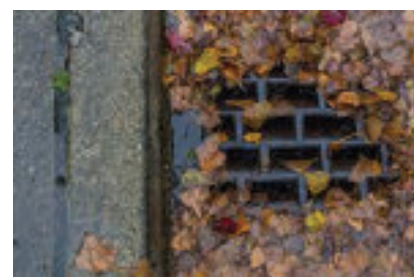
In the last issue of *The Villager*, Dr Reolyn Heymann from the University of Johannesburg (UJ) gave us some insight regarding how to bridge the digital divide via a simplified and easy to use server. In this issue, Dr Heymann explains how she and her team managed to transform the conventional method of lecturing



in the lecture room to virtual lecturing by developing several 'serious games', keeping the entertainment element in mind. Learners will find this article not only interesting, but also valuable for their future studies.

The maintenance team has completed the painting of the stand numbers onto the back or side boundary walls of properties. This will assist the Estate Management to identify a property from the back or side, especially in emergency situations. The team has now started to repaint the stand numbers of all the properties on the road kerbs as part of the general ongoing maintenance. The maintenance and painting of the boundary walls facing the parks or open veld are nearing

completion. Members are requested to ensure that the storm water drainage towards the parks and open veld are open. With the maintenance and preparation of the boundary walls, it was discovered that several boundary wall outlets were blocked. This will cause storm water to dam up against walls, which in turn is one of the main causes of damp walling.



We are once again fortunate that there was no security breach of the perimeter fence during the reporting period, which can be attributed to an effective security system and vigilant security officers. Apart from the secured perimeter, two security vehicles and security officers patrol inside the estate at night time.

During the lockdown period over the past three months the residents of Irene Farm Villages made huge donations towards the people in need. The Irene Farm Villages, as a community, can be proud of itself. Our Support Team played an important role in the collecting, packing and distribution of the donations. We, as a community, would like to thank them for their unselfish service.

Residents are kindly reminded of the following rules:

- No items can be carried or transported out of the estate without the written approval of the resident.
- No vehicle may be carried or towed out of the estate, without the personal confirmation by the owner of the vehicle.
- Trailers, caravans, boats, etc. are not allowed to be parked on the street front of a property.
- Contractors working for longer than three days on a project must be registered at the estate office.
- All pets must be registered at the estate office, whilst cats must be sterilised, and the certificate submitted to the estate office.
- No building addition or alteration may take place without the submission of building plans and the approval thereof by the HOA and Municipality.
- Please ensure that your visitors, contractors, delivery men, etc. have their ID or driver's licence available when accessing the estate.
- Please adhere to the 40kmh speed limit.

At last we have seen construction activities around the existing sinkhole in Queens Way. The Tshwane Municipal contractors have established their construction site in Yellow Wood Park, near the sinkhole site. They indicated that the rehabilitation project will take about four to seven months to complete. However, the commencement date of the rehabilitation work scheduled for 15 July has now been moved forward



to a date still to be announced by the Tshwane Municipality. Please note that several big construction machines will be on the move in the surrounding areas and residents are requested to avoid this area during the construction period.

Remade Recycling, which is responsible for the weekly collection of the recyclables, has reported that flares were found in a recycling bag during the sorting process. The flares went off, causing injury to one of the sorters.



Residents are requested to be mindful not to place dangerous or combustible items in the recycling bags or bins.

It has come to the attention of the HOA that some residents were infected with the COVID-19 virus. We wish you all a speedy recovery and appeal to everyone to take all the necessary precautionary steps to stay healthy.

To give us all some encouragement, Nomthi, the HOA's Office Administrative Assistant, discusses the power within the human being, in a poetic way in this issue.

Best regards,
Estate Management

"You can't go back to change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." – C S Lewis



IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Summary Income Statement – June 2020

	June 2020		Year to Date		YTD Variance	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Value	%
Operational Income						
Levy Income	1 166 332	1 166 333	4 607 152	4 607 154	(2)	0.0%
Other Income	75 725	32 500	237 685	250 300	(12 615)	-5.0%
	1 242 058	1 198 833	4 844 837	4 857 454	(12 617)	-0.3%
Operational Expenditure						
Professional /Administration	68 273	73 216	302 364	296 864	(5 500)	-1.9%
Accounting and Auditing	41 237	41 237	166 555	168 948	2 393	1.4%
Insurance, Legal and Admin	27 036	31 979	135 809	127 916	(7 893)	-6.2%
General Office	4 493	10 306	15 476	44 724	29 248	65.4%
Office Administration	4 493	10 306	15 476	44 724	29 248	65.4%
Operational Expenses	187 097	222 724	727 346	906 896	179 550	19.8%
Municipal Charges	27 012	47 400	114 974	189 600	74 626	39.4%
General Operations	10 876	21 003	50 600	84 012	33 412	39.8%
Salaries & Wages	149 208	154 321	561 772	633 284	71 512	11.3%
Security	474 187	490 563	1 881 065	1 938 764	57 699	3.0%
Security Operations	47 397	65 106	187 493	265 230	77 737	29.3%
Guarding Services	421 790	421 257	1 687 159	1 656 734	(30 425)	-1.8%
Insurance Claims and Excess	5 000	4 200	6 413	16 800	10 387	61.8%
Repairs & Maintenance	217 006	178 084	395 974	696 597	300 623	43.2%
Repairs & Maintenance	73 932	35 010	116 640	144 740	28 100	19.4%
Park Maintenance Contract	143 074	143 074	279 334	551 857	272 523	49.4%
	951 055	974 893	3 322 225	3 883 845	561 620	14.5%
Operating Profit / (Loss)	291 002	223 940	1 522 612	973 609		
Non-Recurring Revenue	15 410	0	40 725	0	40 725	100.0%
Non-Recurring Expenses	17 197	55 200	73 581	210 800	137 219	65.1%
Net Positive/ (Negative)	(1 787)	(55 200)	(32 856)	(210 800)	(96 494)	
Net Profit / (Loss)	289 215	168 740	1 489 756	762 809		

IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION Summary Levy Statements – June 2020

	120+ Days	90 Days	60 Days	30 Days	Current	Total	Previous Month
Normal - Self Pay	-	-	486	6 211	-321 900	- 315 203	-307 344
Normal - Debit Order	-	-	-	-	- 16 442	- 16 442	-11 187
	-	-	486	6 211	-338 341	- 331 644	-318 531
Debt Collection - AA (30/60 days)	21 199	11 232	21 124	48 813	49 397	151 765	209%
Debt Collection - JJR (90+ days)	196 575	37 170	13 787	14 829	11 725	274 086	378%
Debt Collection - KSB (90+ days)	5 567	3 106	3 089	3 091	3 013	17 867	25%
Sold - Previous Owner Accounts	-	-	-	-	- 56 455	- 56 455	-55 516
In Transfer	3 933	1 699	2 601	2 617	2 507	13 357	4 716
Other	830	-	- 1 670	2 001	2 465	3 626	8 351
	228 104	53 206	39 418	77 562	-325 689	72 601	85.9%
Debt Collection - Accounts > R200,000	1 091 528	41 327	29 211	30 138	13 698	1 205 903	-1.6%
	1 319 632	94 533	68 629	107 700	-311 991	1 278 504	1.1%

We want to thank all members who continue to pay their monthly levies so diligently. Amidst the COVID-19 lockdown, members are paying, and many members who fell behind in May settled all outstanding levies. We maintained our debtors book from May to June 2020 with only a 1,1% increase. Last month there was some movement in the number of accounts outstanding, but it's not concerning as yet. The number of accounts owing more than 3 months increased from 18 to 20; 60 days - 26 to 29; 30 days - 51 to 53. Account Ability and the Estate Management are continuously driving collections to ensure adequate cash flow to fulfil the HOA obligations. We reached settlement with one of our > R200 000 accounts, and received the first payment in July.

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	725 876	8 072 034
Security Upgrade Project	Define		1 700 000	1 583 234	116 766
Total			10 497 910	2 309 110	8 188 800

"We can't control everything that happens, but we can change our experience of those things."

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:
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The Power that Lies Within

BY NOMTHI CEBEKHULU

*At some point in our lives we encounter days so dark
that we struggle to see the light.*

*Days during which the silence is so loud
that it overshadows yesterday's sounds of delight.
Hold on, remain strong;
be steadfast and continue to fight.*

*At some point in our lives we encounter days so painful
that we struggle to imagine future joy.
Cold and bitter days during which laughter is
callously swallowed by emotions that only seek to destroy.
Keep moving, stay focused;
during these times perseverance is the best method to employ.*

*At some point in our lives we need to look inside ourselves and see,
that within us is a power that awaits us if only we dare to try.
A power that is awakened not by calm waters but by raging seas and trials,
the power to endure even when we are tempted to surrender and cry.
Believe, trust;
even on days when you don't understand why.*

*At some point in our lives we victoriously make it to the other side,
we triumph over fear and we gain victory over challenges of the past.
We realise that we can bear more than what we previously thought we could,
we learn that most troublesome circumstances seldom come to last.
Have hope, have peace;
for behind you will soon be a test which you have bravely passed.*



(THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS POEM ARE SOLELY THOSE OF BY NOMTHI CEBEKHULU AND ARE NOT THE VIEWS OF THE HOA AS A WHOLE.)

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CODEBREAKERS: Redefining eLearning

BY DR REOLYN HEYMANN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG



In the middle of the first academic semester of 2020, with limited warning, universities had to change to an online learning model, also known as eLearning. However, as pointed out by many scholars, this change was not motivated by carefully studying different teaching and learning methodologies and chosen as the preferred option. It was forced upon us by circumstances, and as such, the 'e' in eLearning should rather refer to 'emergency'.

We are in a period of emergency learning. This is important to keep in mind when dealing with anybody that is attempting to learn during this time, whether it is helping your primary school child count to 100 while the teacher is waiting on Zoom or supporting a tertiary student. It is not business as usual. It is an emergency; it is stressful, and we are all affected by it.

Once you accept that this is emergency learning, you realise that a different approach is needed. It is not enough to ensure that all the work is covered and that academic standards are ensured. It is also needed to find out where everyone is, how are they doing, do they have access to all the necessary equipment, are they coping academically and mentally. Checking in on each other has become an important part of everyday life.

And then, after dealing with the initial shock and stress of moving to a new system, one can start thinking of innovative methods of improving emergency learning. One method that we used, we call 'serious games'. Although there is not one commonly accepted definition for what constitutes a serious game, in this context it is accepted to be a game that is designed with not only entertainment in mind.

A team consisting of Japie Greeff, Carl Heymann, Murray Heymann and myself created an online serious game called *Codebreakers**. The game was developed for an Electrical Engineering fourth year Telecommunications module. The goal of the serious game was to give students the opportunity to practise Information Theory problems in a fun and relaxed way. The game consists of four different game worlds, and each world corresponds to a specific part of the curriculum. The challenges are different in each section to keep the game interesting and are randomised from a big database of questions, thus students can play the game until they have mastered the work. Students' efforts are tracked by the system and personal score boards and overall leader boards are used to motivate students.

With the switch to online learning, the game was used as a tutorial for students. This was a fun and stress-free

way of mastering the work. The students enjoyed the break from the traditional online activities of recorded lectures and online tests and competed for spots on the leader boards. The different game worlds were played more than 500 times, even though the class only consisted of 77 students.

Life will return to normal at some point, but we can keep a few things that we learned from life during lockdown. For me, that would firstly be to not stop questioning the way we do things and rather try new and innovative ways to solve problems. And secondly, and most importantly, let's not stop checking in on each other.

*If you are interested, you can play *Codebreakers* at www.codebreakers.co.za/play, use your email address as your username and choose any password.



Dr Reolyn Heymann
(D. Eng. Electrical and Electronic Engineering)
Director: Centre for Collaborative Digital Networks, University of Johannesburg



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CHESS BY



There are many kinds of chess players. There are several main types of chess players that chess masters and experts have identified.

Chess players can be classified into the following main groups:

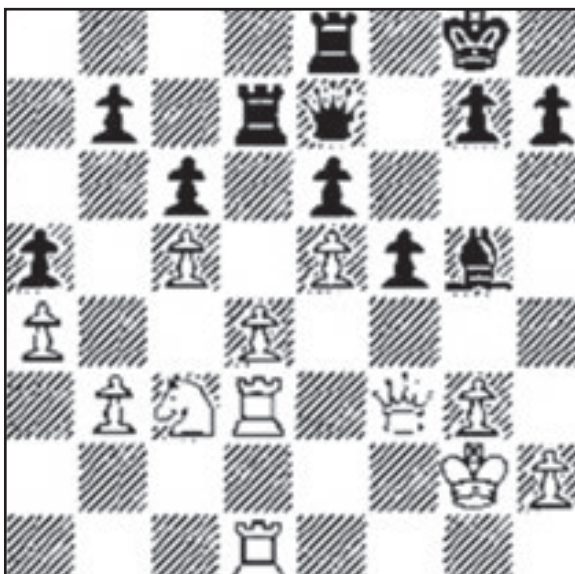
Wood pushers or **patzers**, who move the chess pieces around the board without any apparent plan. They are weak both tactically and strategically. They often fall into obvious traps and leave pieces 'en prise' (pieces that are not protected and can be captured by enemy pieces). Patzers are weak players who play quickly and automatically. This type is typical of the beginner. Chess is a game that cannot be played quickly. The quicker you play the more liable you are to make mistakes.

Another type of chess player is the **kibitzer**. This player has little learning and often is a spectator who is usually the one who offers (often unwanted) advice or commentary about the game that is being played. When the kibitzer plays, an irritating running commentary usually takes place.

There is another group of players, the **strategic players**. These players usually have a good understanding of the game and, like doctors, are able to evaluate the position on the chess board easily. They are able to tell if their position is 'sick' or 'good'. Furthermore, they know how to improve the position to their advantage. In other words, they play good positional chess by having the ability to plan their game.

The critical question is, just how is it done?

The first step is to be able to evaluate the position on the chess board. On the internet there are many examples of how this can be done. Let us examine an actual example of Botvinnik playing White against Flohr in 1936.



At first sight everything looks equal. If we add up the value of the White and Black pieces, we will find out that both sides have two castles, a queen and seven pawns. Neither side has a material advantage.

1. The first step is to assess who has the material advantage.
2. The next step is to look for strengths for both Black and White.
 - a. The mobility of White's pieces is blocked by the pawn structure – there are no open files that rooks (castles) can occupy. There is also little chance to open a file as that would result in creating weaknesses in White's position.
 - b. The position for Black is also blocked and the bishop has very little mobility, in fact it can only move to h6 if attacked by h4.
3. The next step is to examine the **pawn structure**. There are a number of holes squares that can be protected by pawns d5 and d6. The hole on d6 is particularly weak and if White can place his knight there, then he would have a considerable advantage. The problem is how to get the knight there?
4. Planning: Getting the knight to d6! The sequence nb1 → a3 → c4 → d6 is the way to get the knight to d6. There is little or nothing that Black can do about this. If Black swaps the bishop for the knight on d6 then White has a protected pass pawn on d6 and Black's game becomes even more cramped for space.
5. The next step is to assess the position once the knight has reached d6. Problem? Where can White now break through to add more pressure on Black's position? The answer is relatively simple: Black can break through on the queen side by moving the rook to b1 and advancing the b pawn, thus opening the b file onto the backward pawn on b7.

What is meant by pawn structure? The pawn structure, put very simply, is the way the pawns are located (positioned) on the chess board. The pawn structure is largely determined by the opening one plays. Different openings give rise to different pawn structures. The pawn structure is what remains if you remove all the other pieces from the board. See the example below:



The positional chess player must have a knowledge of **different pawn structures** in order to assess which positions are weak (sick) and which are good.

The Passed pawn

On the diagram below you can see that the White a5 pawn is not only passed, but also located on the other side of the board. These two factors make the a5-pawn extremely valuable. Black king cannot intercept this pawn, which guarantees a safe promotion, and secures the win.



Doubled Pawns

Doubled pawns are the pawns of the same colour, located on the same file. This is probably one of the weakest pawn structures because not only doubled pawns cannot protect each other, but they also can be easily blocked with a single opponent's pawn.



Pawn islands

Single pawns scattered all over the board. In the endgame they often become easy targets for the opponent's pieces. White's pawns in the diagram below that are on the red squares are scattered. Something that should be avoided.



Isolated Pawn

An isolated pawn is a pawn that cannot be protected by any other pawns. In King and Pawn endings this is especially important since isolated pawns become very weak. On the diagram below the White b4 pawn is an isolated pawn, because it cannot be defended by other pawns. That gives Black a permanent weakness to exploit.



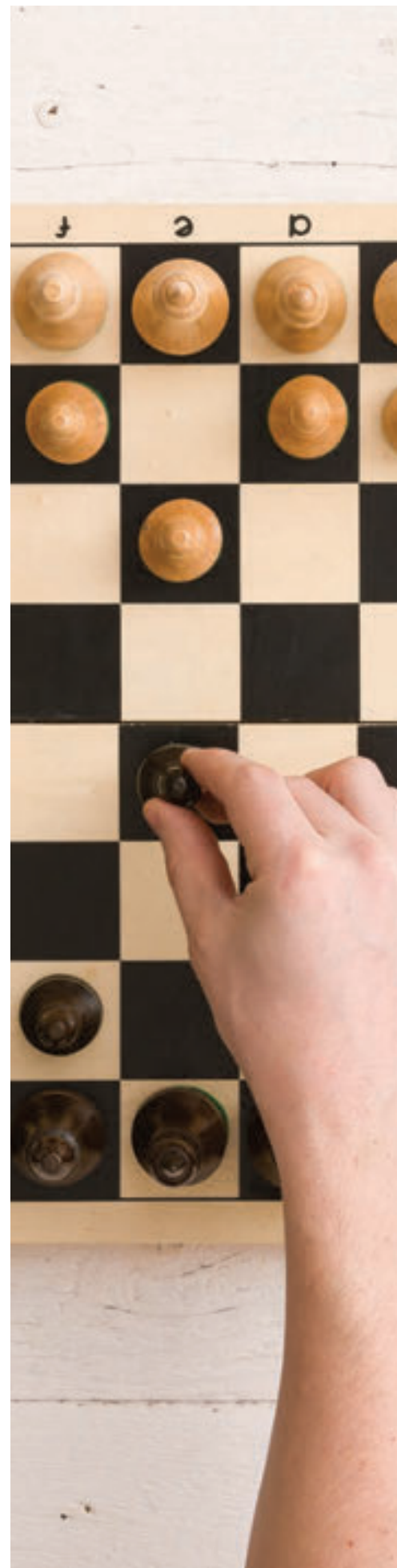
Connected pawns:

Connected pawns are pawns that can protect each other. This is one of the strongest pawn structures. On the diagram below White and Black have connected pawns. White's structure is superior to the structure of Black.



Backward pawn

This occurs when one of the connected pawns cannot move forward because it will be captured by the opponent's pawn. A 'backward pawn' is something to avoid. On the diagram below, both White's and Black's pawns are connected. Black's d6 pawn is the backward pawn, making the pawn structure weak. White's b5 pawn is strong because it is a protected passed pawn.





Lawrence and
Francoise Anthony

SPEAKING WITH ELEPHANTS

BY JAMES CLARKE, ASSISTED BY MARY BROADLEY

One of the strange consequences of lockdown happened at Thula Thula Game Reserve northwest of Empangeni in Zululand. This is where Lawrence and Francoise Anthony, in 1999, took custody of a herd of wild and traumatised elephants - and added to the annals of Africa's wildlife story.

Many will know the late Lawrence Anthony's 2010 best-seller, *The Elephant Whisperer* and the unforgettable sequel in 2018, *An Elephant in my Kitchen*, by his wife, Francoise, who by then was widowed after Lawrence suffered a heart attack.

Francoise, an archetypal Parisienne, now runs Thula Thula and one cannot help but be moved by what is happening there.

My interest in Thula Thula is in the way it has demonstrated that the African elephant can display unmistakable signs of empathy towards humans and how uncannily close their social codes are to ours. Recent happenings at Thula

Thula indicate how relatively quickly elephants can come to trust and enjoy being with humans – despite all we have done to them – and how tantalisingly close we can get to understanding each other.

I am currently working on a book on the possibility of intelligent cross-species communication and how the elephant is one of the few mammals that shows a desire to communicate with us but doesn't know how. And nor do we know how. Not yet.

The importance of the couple's experiences in Thula Thula is that, on several occasions, they came near to penetrating the communications barrier and captured the attention and, eventually, the love of a once traumatised wild elephant matriarch who eventually helped them earn the respect of the whole herd.

Francoise says that, since the COVID-19 lockdown, the herd has been hovering between the lodge, tented camp and main house, 'non-stop'.

"They come in front of my house and just wait, for hours. They know something is wrong and are wondering why no more humans are around. They have never done this before."

Thula Thula's remarkable story began in 1999 when Lawrence Anthony agreed, with grave doubts, to accept a herd of 11 confused and dangerously

aggressive elephants – survivors of poor custodianship near Kruger Park. He knew nothing of the last-minute botch-up during the capture operation which resulted in two of the elephants being shot – including the matriarch. The dead matriarch's traumatised son (later called Mnumzane – 'Sir') was one of the big young tuskiers that were transported with the herd south to Thula Thula, all in a semi-drugged condition. The second oldest cow (later to be named Nana) had quickly taken over as matriarch.

Elephants are like that. When a matriarch dies the next oldest, or most respected female, assumes control.

Lawrence reinforced Thula Thula's perimeter fence and prepared, deep in the reserve, a strongly fenced *boma* surrounded by electrified cables carrying 8 000 volts. There, the elephants would stay until he felt they were habituated to their new habitat and could be freed.

Their night-time arrival at Thula Thula, during a violent thunderstorm, could hardly have been more traumatic: heavy curtains of rain, bolts of lightning and the screaming of engines as heavy trucks struggled to extricate themselves from the Zululand mud, and then a cannon-like shot as a tyre burst. It took hours before the trumpeting elephants were inside the boma.

More traumas were to follow, including a mass break-out from the boma.

Nana never ceased to patrol the boma fence seeking a spot where the current might be off. Lawrence camped nearby, continually calling out to Nana assuring her of his good intentions. But every time he came near the fence Nana would charge, stopping short of the electric barrier. The weeks passed. Day after day Lawrence kept vigil but came nearer and nearer the fence. Each time Nana charged. Towards the end, Lawrence just stood his ground at the fence, calling her name.

One morning, he found Nana waiting for him at the fence. She was very calm. He moved, very slowly, within touching distance, and found himself looking up at her enormous form towering above him.

Then, "Nana's trunk snaked through the fence, carefully avoiding the electric strands, and reached my body. She gently touched me. I was surprised at the wetness of her trunk tip."

She stood and looked at Lawrence for a few moments before turning back to the herd, 20 metres away, where Frankie, her closest companion, greeted her with apparent excitement. Lawrence decided that the following day he would release them. When he arrived at dawn they were crowded at the fence "as if they anticipated something special was about to happen".



Nana and family

When he arrived at dawn they were crowded at the fence "as if they anticipated something special was about to happen"

He let them out.

One day, Mnumzane, the disoriented male orphan of the previous matriarch and now an almost fully-grown bull, charged Lawrence with murderous intent. Nana stepped between them. Mnumzane eventually left the herd, as is the habit of mature males, and became an affectionate friend of Lawrence's. But that's another story – a very moving one.

Indeed, there are so many stories.

If Lawrence went overseas or to another part of the country, the herd would sense his imminent return and travel miles to wait at the house to greet him. He called it 'spooky'. Francoise, in her own book, describes something spookier.

After Lawrence's death, rangers spotted a new-born, very emaciated calf, its trunk and face deeply cut into by a thick wire snare. It was unable to suckle. When Vusi, Francoise's right-hand man, went to see what could be done he spotted the herd through binoculars, but no calf. It was late afternoon. He sat in his vehicle and

was surprised to see the herd coming towards him. They stopped metres away and Vusi spotted the calf below its mother's belly. The mother was stroking its head, but the baby was unresponsive.

The only solution was to wait till dawn and bring in a veterinarian by helicopter and then, using two vehicles, drive the elephants off and isolate the calf.

Francoise describes how the calf was hurriedly anaesthetised using a drug dart. To fully appreciate how narrow the gap is between elephants and humans when living in cordial circumstances, it is important to visualise the trauma involved in this operation and its remarkable aftermath.

Rangers cut away the wire and applied antiseptic salve and then injected a fast-reaction recovery drug before rapidly withdrawing. From a distance, they watched the agitated herd rush towards the calf as it unsteadily wobbled towards its mother.

Francoise says, "Freed from the snare, his trunk curled up against her belly

and his little mouth searched hungrily for her teat" . . . there was silence among those watching.

The team departed to allow the herd to disappear deep into the bush, which they were expected to do for days – perhaps even weeks. That evening, Francoise invited the rescue team to a sunset champagne celebration a couple of kilometres from the lodge. When she stepped out of her house ready to go, "who should be at the entrance of the lodge to meet me? The entire herd!"

Incredibly, after the racket of the helicopter; after the panic; after the stampeding and the trumpeting of the distressed cow forced to abandon her calf . . . there they were, "every single one of them. They stayed with us for hours . . . who knows what they were thinking?"

Was it gratitude? Did they want to say something? Of course, they did.

One day, I believe, we'll find a way to communicate with another species. And one day we'll crack the code and speak with elephants.



Part of the herd on a visit to the lodge - they respect the flimsy fence

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another household in the estate, but they moved during lockdown. Caroline has 3 days a week available now. She is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. For a reference, you are welcome to call me, Elmarie on 084 955 5999, or call Caroline on 062 336 6526 for an interview.

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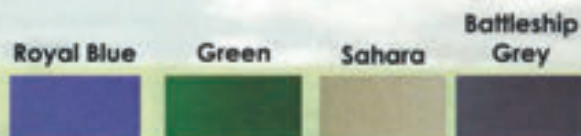
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