

DAINFERN

precinct LIVING



Rising Star: Skye Goss

Dainfern College Head Girl 2020

ISSUE 9 2019

The Iconic
Toyota GR Supra

Working Dogs
have Rights

Peru - Machu Picchu
and its Birdlife



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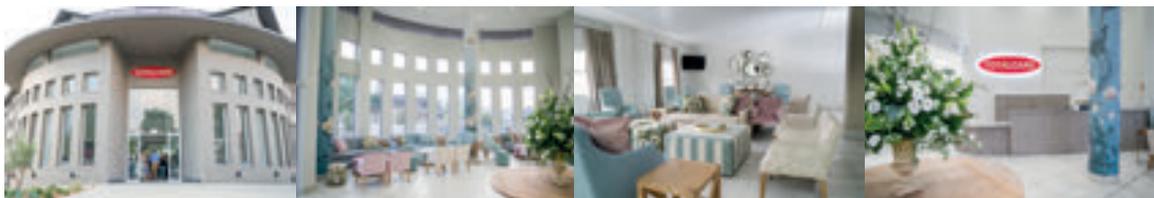
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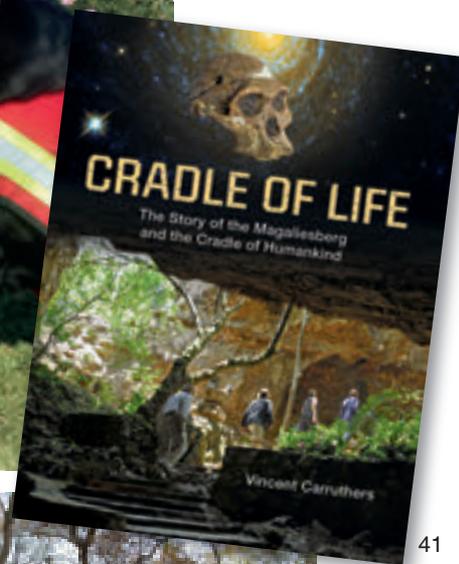
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MILESTONES & LANDMARK EVENTS

In this issue, we chat to one of our stars in our precinct, Skye Goss, who has been chosen Head Girl of her school for 2020. Being the daughter of a celebrity – former Miss SA for 1990, Suzette van der Merwe – and rubbing shoulders with a host of prominent personalities such as Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters (Miss South Africa and Miss Universe 2017), Dr Ellen Roux (National Director of the South African Championships of Performing Arts and Beyond 2000), and TV and radio presenter, Anele Mdoda, amongst many others – can either be daunting or inspiring. Skye has clearly risen to thrive amongst the shining stars and has set her course towards a bright future. We wish her well for her final and most rewarding year of school.

We also take a look at the ongoing activities taking place at the DCA Youth Forum and showcase the initiatives undertaken by Bridget Phiri, Mongi Mabadi and Thulani Molefe. Well done girls for going the extra mile to make a difference.

Another milestone to be celebrated is the launch of the Working Dogs have Rights Campaign undertaken by the South African Guide-Dogs Association for the Blind. Having done some media work for the Hospitality industry in the past, I have come to appreciate the ongoing efforts by FEDHASA and others



in the industry to improve access for visually impaired and disabled people in general, and in my view, the top hospitality establishments are amongst the best internationally for making provision for people with mobility challenges. However, there's always room for improvement and it seems that some of the other sectors have lagged behind badly when it comes to making allowances for people who have equal rights in the eyes of the law but still suffer the indignities of shabby treatment by staff who have not been properly trained. It's refreshing to see that the South African Guide-Dogs Association for the Blind has taken a firm stand and we assure you that we, at Dainfern Precinct Living magazine, are behind you all the way.

Empowerment takes many different forms and we would like to thank Izabella Gates, author and MD of Life Talk Forum, for sharing her article on empowering young people to make life-enriching choices. Thanks also to Simon Crane,

Deputy Head of HeronBridge College for his insight into how to encourage new drivers.

The Toyota GR Supra featured on our cover with Skye Goss would be any new driver's dream car, of course, especially when it comes in race car red. The photo shoot for the cover took place in Dainfern Valley, which is our featured estate in this edition.

Dainfern Valley once again won a Double Gold Award in the South African Landscapers Institute (SALI) Awards of Excellence. The awards recognised their excellent landscape and turf maintenance, and their water-wise practices. Congratulations to the Dainfern HOA team and to Servest Landscaping & Turf for once again bagging these prestigious accolades.

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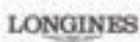


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ARTHUR KAPLAN



MAINTENANCE AT DAINFERN VALLEY



A rose garden was removed to establish this mother bed for propagation purposes. Succulents from here are used throughout the estate, wherever they are needed.

We are very proud of the pristine surroundings of our precinct and would like to celebrate the efforts of those estates that are going the extra mile to maintain their internal landscaping for the benefit of all of their residents. Here, we take a look at Dainfern Valley, double gold award winners in this year's SALI Awards.

**TEXT & PHOTOS BY
KARYN RICHARDS**

Dainfern Valley Estate in our precinct recently received a double gold award in the 2019 SALI Awards of Excellence. They were entered in the category of Landscape and Turf Maintenance, and also received a gold award for their water-wise practices.

MANAGING THE DAILY AND WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Maintenance for the common area landscaped sections (i.e. not individual home gardens) is overseen by Marnel Booysen, Branch Manager for Servest Landscaping & Turf, together with Estate Manager, Judy Veale. The homeowners maintain their own gardens and verges.

There are approximately 20 workers undertaking the maintenance, fewer in winter than in summer. On a daily basis, work involves cleaning of the main boulevard and ensuring that the irrigation system is problem free.

Weekly activities involve grass cutting and refuse removal. Booysen says they also look at areas that can be upgraded and improved, and they check that the plant material is not overgrown. "We undertake splitting and dividing on a regular basis and always make use of this plant material elsewhere on the estate, wherever it is needed. We also engage sound horticultural practices in terms of planting and waste management. Some plants are removed to reduce maintenance and water usage, for example *Abelia grandiflora* and *Salvia* hedges are taken to the onsite nursery and we can then assess where they can be re-used, sometimes even on one of the other estates that we maintain," she explains.

SEASONAL WORK

Monthly maintenance tasks depend on the seasons, for example pruning and dead-heading. Forward planning is also done monthly and a mother bed has



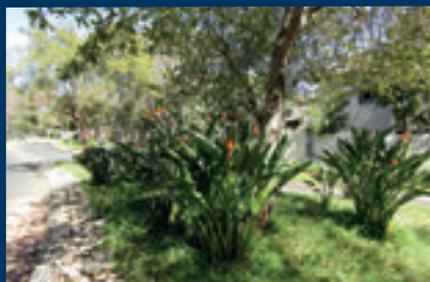
Above: Irrigation uses borehole water only



Yellow Namaqualand Daisies



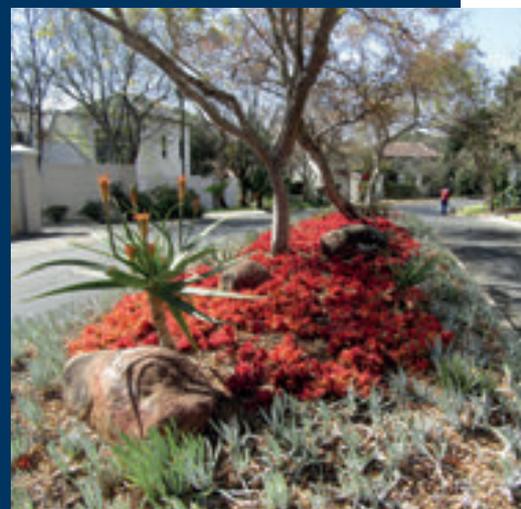
Well-tended traffic circle



Strelitzias provide warm winter colour

been established at Dainfern Valley for propagation purposes. Succulents planted along the main entrance boulevard were sourced from this mother bed, which had previously been a high maintenance rose garden. Booyesen adds: "The rose garden didn't really tie in with the overall feel of the estate, and following our decision to become more ecologically sound and water-wise, we decided to remove it and start the aloe and succulent garden. This has helped to bring insect and bird life back to the estate."

In winter, the emphasis is on splitting and dividing, focusing on upgrades and areas that can be improved. Booyesen says, however, that at all times, the main entrance boulevard needs to have "a wow impact" as it is the first point of contact for residents and visitors as they drive in. "With summer soon on the way, we will be planting varieties such as the new (disease-free) Impatiens, red Salvia and Coleus. We use one supplier, Peebles Plants, who propagates for us and whose quality is consistently good," she says. With regard to the estate's water-wise practices, Booyesen says they are concentrating on using indigenous and water-wise plant material, especially varieties that can be split, divided, propagated and re-used. "Our site manager, Wiseman Buthelezi, has a passion for propagating and it was his idea to establish the on-site nursery for this purpose, and to experiment with different cuttings."



Crassulas from the mother bed planted to provide a splash of colour

Hard landscaping maintenance all year round involves weeding, sweeping and leaf blowing along the main entrance boulevard, cleaning of water features and ensuring that the irrigation system is functioning optimally, without leaks or blockages.

Another project undertaken by Servest is the control of erosion along the banks of the Jukskei River which runs through the estate. Booyesen says they have started planting indigenous grasses in this area, in combination with slope stabilisation, and it is hoped that these grasses will soon restore the health of the ecosystem.

GOOD WORK, GOOD IMPRESSION, GOOD RESPONSE

The estate's boulevard is a series of beautifully maintained circles, triangles and islands, with plant material grouped in colours and varieties. Reds come from the Aloes and Crassulas, oranges from Clivias and Strelitzias, and yellows from a cheerful, sunny mass of Namaqualand Daisies on Valley Boulevard.

This, and the subsequent SALI gold awards, prompted residents to compliment the landscaping team with the following positive comments, published in Dainfern's newsletter (Issue 5 of 2019): "Congratulations to everyone involved in this effort and winning this award. The Valley team is thrilled about the water-wise award. Well done to all!" "Wow that is fantastic..... congrats to everybody who made this possible!" "Proud to live in this beautiful estate!" "Our gardens are a privilege to enjoy!" "I would like to congratulate Judy and her team for the dedication and hard work in the gardens. It has stood us in good stead as Dainfern Valley received a double gold in the SALI Awards" "Congratulations on these achievements. Great to have your hard work recognised!"

2019 SALI AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

We would like to encourage all of the estates in our precinct to enter the SALI Awards, not only for the accolades but as a measure of the degree of excellence that you are achieving in your own environment.

The South African Landscapers Institute promotes professionalism and quality in landscaping. SALI landscapers not only create beautiful gardens, they focus on environmental rehabilitation and using water-wise plants. Their scope of work covers commercial and residential landscaping, care of sports fields, playgrounds, roof-top gardens, water features, soft and hard landscaping and even the care of indoor plants.

The 2019 SALI Awards of Excellence took place in Cape Town in June. Entries were eligible for Merit, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Trophy Awards and a Double Gold Award indicates an award in a category as well as Water-wise Excellence (indicated by WW after the project name).



Below: Best Landscape & Turf Maintenance – Life Landscapes for Phillip Morris

SALI Shield for Excellence in Landscaping, Overall Winner – Bidvest Top Turf for Hertford Office Park Dam Area



Best Estate - Servest Landscaping & Turf for Dainfern Valley Estate (WW)





Best Use of Colour in the Landscape – Atlantiscapes for Somerset Lakes Clubhouse



SALI National Chairperson's Discretionary Award – Leon Kluge



Best Water-Wise Project – Peninsula Landscaping for Steenberg Green



Best Specialised Turf Construction - Golf Data for Leopard Creek

GOLD AWARDS

Category: Specialised Landscape Construction

- Golf Data for Steyn City School Play Area
- Tswellapele Plants for Future Africa
- Green Earth Landscapes for Lifestyle Centre
- Tswellapele Plants for Noordgesig Plaza and Colin Drive Intersection
- Greenacres Landscapes for Lynwood Bridge
- Trees South Africa for Mature English Oak Relocation
- Tswellapele Plants for Cosmos Circle Park
- Tswellapele Plants for Leeubekkie Park
- Greenacres Landscapes for Loftus Park
- Trees South Africa for Stellenbosch Historical Tree Rescue
- Greenacres Landscapes for Club 2
- Greenacres Landscapes for Fernwood
- Tswellapele Plants for Katjiepiering Park
- Trees South Africa for Mature Coral Tree Rescue
- Trees South Africa for Tokara Swamp Cypress Rescue

Category :Landscape and Turf Maintenance

- Servest Landscaping & Turf for St Stithians College
- Life Landscapes for Menlyn Maine (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Stone Ridge Country Estate
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Olive Crescent Retirement Village (WW)
- Bidvest Top Turf for Inanda Greens (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for St Dunstan's College
- Bidvest Top Turf for Telkom Park Centurion (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Centurion Country Estate
- Bidvest Top Turf for Inanda Club Landscaping
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for UFS Rugby Fields
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Woodlands Office Park (WW)
- Life Landscapes for Phillip Morris (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Dainfern Valley Estates (WW)
- Peninsula Landscaping for Steenberg Green (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Silverstar Casino
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Wesbank (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Hazeldean Office Park (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Department of Environmental Affairs

Category: Specialised Turf Construction

- Turftech for Ashton International College

- Golf Data for Leopard Creek (WW)
- Turftech for Curro Building Blocks Gold (WW)
- Turftech for Ligbron Academy Construction (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Sol Plaatjie Municipality, Skilpadsaal Renovations, De Beers & Galeshewe Stadium (WW)

Category: Environmental Landscape/Conservation Work

- Countryline Horticulture for Ridgeside Coastal Forest Conservancy
- Leitch Landscapes for Fairmont Zimbali Resort
- Tswellapele Plants for Future Africa (WW)
- Servest Landscaping & Turf for Simbithi Eco Estate (WW)

Category: Landscape Construction with Design by Others

- FSG Property Services Landscaping Division for Apartments on William (WW)
- Tswellapele Plants for Construction of Noordgesig Plaza and Colin Drive Intersection (WW)
- Bidvest Top Turf for Hertford Office Park Dam Area (WW)
- Amaloba Landscaping for University of Pretoria Jasmyn Ladies Hostel
- Bidvest top Turf for Private Residence Bryanston
- Atlantiscapes for Somerset Lakes Forest Swale (WW)
- Life Landscapes for Shamwari Riverdene Phase 1
- Greenacres Landscapes for The Blyde Riverwalk Estate
- Green Earth Landscapes for Fernwood (WW)
- Tswellapele Plants for Katjiepiering Park (WW)
- Idube Landscaping for Cornubia Retail Park (WW)
- Tswellapele Plants for Leeubekkie Park (WW)
- Atlantiscapes for Somerset Lakes Clubhouse (WW)
- Greenacres Landscapes for Lynnwood Bridge
- Peninsula Landscaping for Steenberg Green (WW)
- VIP Gardens for Ackermans Head Office

Landscape Construction with In-House Design

- Bidvest Top Turf for Private Residence Ruimsig
- Green Creations Landscaping for Thompsons Travel House
- Garden Gate Landscaping for House van der Merwe (WW)
- Garden Gate Landscaping for House Rosema
- Environmental Studios for House Marshall (WW)
- McWades Landscapes for House Potts (WW)
- Alan Dawson Gardens for Garden Davis
- GvH Landscapes for House de Bruin

DAINFERN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Now that we are well into the DCA Youth Forum monthly meetings, we recognise that there are serious concerns with issues that our youth have to deal with today. Some issues have always been there and other issues are new trends as, every day, society tries to adapt to a faster pace of life.

The decision to create a platform for our youth to voice the issues of the day was in response to the pressing concerns that tweens and teens, the leaders of our tomorrow, are faced with. Some of the issues are extreme situations, and a real need was detected for adults and the youth to bridge the gap.

In the drive to communicate with the new generation, a group of facilitators is being trained by Izabella Gates (Author of the Life Talk books for teens and families, and founder/MD of Life Talk Forum NPC), who is a resident in the precinct. The facilitators attend two sessions a month, which are held on Thursdays from 5pm to 6pm. Those who participate are being equipped to facilitate the monthly meetings and small group sessions.

The last few meetings have been held at the Dainfern Square Shopping Centre. Once again, on 8 September, Dainfern Square provided the perfect venue. Col'Cacchio and Ocean Basket provided mouth-watering refreshments that were available throughout the meeting.

The following pressing issues were some of the topics open for discussion: the Men are Trash movement, Women Don't Feel Safe, the rape culture, the Feminist movement fuelled by the media, (these topics are all interrelated), risky behaviours of youth, Fake News, Xenophobia, Mental Illness, and Bulimia, to name but a few. Transgenderism was discussed and the suggestion was that holding Olympics designed for transgender athletes could be a solution.

From the topics raised, a few priority concerns were chosen and discussed in small groups.

The topics that raised the most concerns were that the rape culture in South Africa does not only affect women but men as well, and the seriousness of the 'Men are Trash' movement that's hitting social media.

FACILITATORS' FEEDBACK

Xenophobia

After a brief debate, we came to the conclusion that the reasoning behind these attacks is not fair. People are saying they attack because the "Nigerians are stealing their jobs" or "The Zimbabweans are taking their women", where in actual fact, the people who complain don't really want the jobs and women. They don't want to admit that they're wrong and they don't want to work hard to get what "the foreigners are stealing". It seems to be easier to blame everyone else because they don't feel like getting things fairly. We also linked these attacks to similar times during the apartheid era. The majority of the group believes that, because of apartheid, white supremacy is still in the mind-set of black South Africans, which is why the targets aren't Caucasian, but rather other black people. Everyone is scared and the only way they know how to resolve an issue is through violence.

#menaretrash

This topic was an interesting one where we looked at both sides: men are trash vs men are not.

We came to the conclusion that the 'Men are Trash' movement came around because of the anger in women and people as a whole. While many guys are offended by this statement, we saw why it came about. Social media has targeted men for quite some time, but due to the recent events here, it's exploded. People think that because men have been put on a golden throne, it's "about time to tear them down". It has become a trend to hate men. We also explored why we feel men may be trash. It is set in many men's heads - from a young age - that they are superior so they take women for granted.

Women's Safety

This topic was very briefly spoken about as it links with a number of other topics which we'll explore in more detail. Here, we realised that it's not only women who feel unsafe, it's also men. Men and women feel equally in danger. This might not necessarily involve the rapes and murders that have been happening, it could also be linked back to the xenophobic incidents.

Fake News

Fake news as a definition decided by my group is "news disseminated by media





“ Society has normalised the rape of women and has completely ignored the rape of men ”

showing us what 'they' want us to see". It's not necessarily the truth. Fake news in Africa has been horrible. It was decided that the news now-a-days has been completely disproportionate and very over-exaggerated. "On the news we see so many bloody attacks happening every day, but when I go past these areas, everyone seems fine and happy." This was a statement mentioned by one of the girls in my group. She highlighted the fact that these news reports are going to ruin our economy. Investors from overseas companies will see these reports as a huge deterrent. No one will want to invest in our country or work with us. This will result in a major economic decline.

Rape Culture

"She asked for it", "What was she wearing?", "Was she drunk?", "Men can't get raped."

These are some of the statements that we hear every day, wherever we go. My group discussed this issue and decided that society has normalised the rape of women and has completely ignored the rape of men. Men get raped, too. And the only reason no one really sees it on the news is because men were taught to keep their emotions to themselves. Another reason they keep it to themselves is because they are embarrassed, as are some of the women, except no one ever really believes a man at all or takes it seriously when he comes out with the truth. We also spoke about false accusations and how they ruin lives. We saw that women (and sometimes men) make false accusations because they want attention or because they are being petty. For example: they may say they were raped by their boss if their job was terminated. Another point raised was that some facts are changed after a victim is raped. And social media is good at making women look like toys. And laws on rape aren't hectic enough, so people think they can get away with it.

Feminism diluted by Social Media

Here, we decided that it's not social media that has diluted feminism, but rather people themselves. People see this as a joke only being used when convenient. Example: Women use their gender as an excuse, e.g. "You're not hiring me because I'm a woman." This leaves everyone uncomfortable, unnecessarily. Feminism as a definition has fully lost





its meaning and is not seen or respected as it should be and how its founders meant for it to be. And those who set the example of feminism don't use it properly, they don't put actions to words. A girl in my group stated that Beyoncé's album *Lemonade* was written because her husband - Jay Z - cheated on her and she was going to leave him "for the right of womanhood". Then, months later, they were expecting twins. Women don't hold up to their words and it makes feminism seem even more of a joke. "Feminism has gone too far." This was highlighted because people think that it's being shoved down their throats and used to bring men down (as we explored earlier). We discussed ways in which we could possibly un-dilute feminism. Ways such as: sowing the real meaning into people's minds and to promoting it the right way - women should be putting actions to their words.

The consensus of all the group discussions was that, when we label ourselves e.g. as a feminist etc., we dilute our individual purpose. We should be careful of using labels to suit ourselves. We could be verbalising what we perceive someone to be, they then feel inclined to behave in a certain way due to those expectations, as many people are inclined to be what one calls them. If someone keeps saying that you're stupid, you will start believing that you are stupid. If they keep saying you are a rapist, you could end up becoming a rapist. It would be good for ladies to get out of the box and help other women in need. Men could be mentored by other men to be better men. Young people can help their friends back on track when they lose moral ground. Lead by example, show yourself to be a better person.

We want to say a big thank you to: Tristan, Ian, Gail, Willem; the facilitators: Abigail, Dorothy and Alyssa; as well as every single person who is working tirelessly behind the scenes to make this Youth Forum possible.



RESPONSE FROM SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS

“I thought I knew what is going on with the youth of today, but hearing the issues first-hand from the other young people regarding what's happening, gave me more of an understanding and a different perspective of what is really going on.”

“The Forum gives me the opportunity to speak to others about what is happening to and within me; and to learn and understand the real issues better.”

“It is enlightening to see there are so many other young people who think and feel the same as I do, and realise that they are dealing with the same problems that I have. Normally, when you speak to adults, they don't really understand that the problems that we face are real problems, whereas here we can get advice from other young people who are going through the same things. They can suggest how to deal with the problems and give advice on how to resolve them.”

“Just meeting some great people when other people come and share their stories, empowers me and inspires me to be better. I have come to realise that I can maybe help someone else, by telling them about my own experiences.”

“Ever since I started to come to the monthly DCA youth meetings, I realised that there are other people who struggle with the same issues that I do, and that there are people who love me and that I do not have to self-harm anymore.”

“For me, it is an opportunity to meet up with new people and learn new things.”

MENTAL ILLNESS DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

BY MONTANA ROBINSON

When we have these preconceived notions of what depression or anxiety or eating disorders look like, and we feel we don't fit such descriptions, we don't believe we have them. What we don't realise, though, is that mental illness takes on the most subtle and unassuming forms, and thus it is often difficult to recognise this illness within ourselves.

Persevering through difficult times - times that come after we recognise the hurt within us - is what we owe to ourselves.

The greatest gift we can give ourselves is something so elusive, and it feels as though we're always chasing after it. Time.

Time allows us all to feel the mist of Cloud 9 on our skins, and taste the bitter-sweetness of melancholy. Time allows us to fall and rise - and it will allow us to soar.

Even though at times you feel small, fragile and weak, you must persevere. Brandish your strength like a sword. Overcome those trying times. Reward yourself with the happiness and progress you deserve. So, persevere.

*Do not quake at your fragility
Bask in it
For you can break
And knowing that
You are unbreakable.*

*Do not waver at your delicateness
As you pool over like a flower
You are dainty and soft
And because of that
You are strong.*



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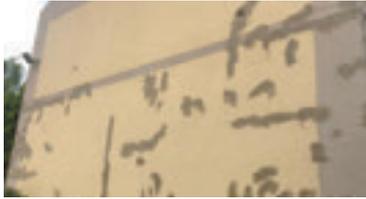
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Let's get social

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A heartfelt initiative run by Bridget Lissy Phiri from Lady Daughter House (LDH), **Talk career with me** is a competition that aims to teach and promote the art of public speaking at schools.

The competition was hosted at Kwena Molopo comprehensive farm school. It kick-started with the students from the different schools showcasing their gift of speech. The audience was blown away by the ability of the students who spoke with an eloquence and knowledge beyond their years. Interesting points were raised about which careers are becoming obsolete and the future of artificial intelligence and robotics was discussed.

Although all of the students from the four schools spoke brilliantly, it was evident from early on in the competition that Mederian Cosmo High was the front-runner.

Mederian Cosmo High walked away as the winners of the competition, with Kwena Molapo in second place and Diepsloot Combined in third place.

The event ended off with the handing out of trophies, sponsored by Etienne Kalp, to the winning schools.

A NOTE OF THANKS: We would like to give thanks to all of the sponsors and to all the people who pitched in to make the event such a huge success. We would like to thank the organisers, the judges and the sponsors who provided the food, the trophies and the certificates: Richard Fowlds, Willem Lindique, Sharon Ngizari, Nkulu Dube, Mary Mpore, Michael Malinga, and last but not least the teachers and students from Kwena Molapo Comprehensive Farm School; Diepsloot Secondary 3; Meridian Cosmo High and Diepsloot Combined School who all took the time to attend and participate in this inaugural event on a Friday Afternoon!



TALK CAREER WITH ME

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The winners with their trophy and certificate



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WOMEN'S DAY NETBALL FUN



Women empowerment is a much talked-about topic today. Women are increasingly getting empowered to decide the course of their lives and professions and realise their fullest potential. But transformation is a bottom-up approach which means we must invest in the development of talent in township and rural communities.



It is believed by the organisers, Mongi Mabadi and Thulani Molefe, who were responsible for the youth day football tournament on 16 June 2019, as well as the woman's day netball tournament on 9 August 2019, in the Thabo Mbeki Informal settlement, that through sports for development, young people do not only get to play their beloved sports, they also learn essential life skills which directly translate into achievement.



Teaching self-confidence, teambuilding and communication, the tournaments fill in elemental pieces to the 'academic puzzle'. These are critical to a well-rounded education and a brighter future.

development of the community. Part of this project involves getting more sponsors so that it is not just a once a year event. There are plans to establish a skills training centre which, if all goes according to plan, will be up and running by the end of next year.

A NOTE OF THANKS: We would like to give special thanks to the sponsor and to all the people who pitched in to make this event such a huge success. We would also like to thank the community, the coaches, the DCA youth representatives, as well as the American School teachers and all who took the time to attend and participate in the event. But, most of all, we want to thank the netball teams who contributed to the success of the event.



The teams that participated in the netball tournament were: the Tornado Netball Team, the Mighty Girls, the Mzala Netball Team, the Malatjie Netball Team, the Video Netball Team, the Siyadlala Netball Team, the Peace Lovers and the Ngizwe Netball Team. There was a spirit of excitement in the air as the girls battled it out on the court. In the end, a well-deserved Tornado netball team took home the gold – as part of the rewards for being the winners of the competition, they each went home with a brand new netball kit and a medal to remind them of their victory. The Mighty Girls took second place.

The sponsor for both events was Peter Venter, CEO of the Tower Group. The day was a huge success.



The organisers felt that empowering such youth and creating upliftment through sport would have a positive impact in the

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TRACKING OUR ALUMINI



College Principal Matthew Davies chatting to some of the Class of 2009 at their reunion



Dainfern College students and alumni after their hockey match

Choosing the best school to prepare your child for tertiary education and the workplace when the child in question is only five years old can be quite a challenge. Aside from ensuring the school is well versed in the latest teaching methods, understands the skills required for the 21st Century, and offers a comprehensive and holistic educational programme that extends beyond the classroom, parents would do well to look at matriculants of the school and their tertiary study choices and career successes.

The first Dainfern College alumni matriculated in 2001 and the College is very proud of its unbroken record of a 100% IEB Matric pass ever since. Its students have gone on to study at top universities across the country as well as overseas and have carved out stellar careers in medicine, business, law, the arts, motor racing and the entertainment industry, to name a few. Many have retained close contact with the College through alumni events and celebrations.

At the annual Founders' Day celebration this year, one of the speakers was the new Chairman of the Alumni Association, Mr Stephen Pettitt. Under



Above: Paige Pollard at her graduation



Right: Old Lions chairman Stephen Pettitt addresses Dainfern College



Students vs alumni touch rugby match



Ten-year reunion dinner with the Class of 2008.

his leadership, the Dainfern College Alumni Association has been relaunched as the Old Lions Association. It has a new name, new logo and a committee of like-minded young adults wishing to strengthen the ties with each other and with their College.

Stephen comments: "The renaming of the Association as the Old Lions represents a significant step towards becoming a more involved and active Alumni Association. Our vision, encapsulated in our new Constitution, is to become a thriving community of committed and involved Dainfern College matriculants who continue to add value to the College long after they have left, in the ultimate best interests of and for the prosperity and good name of the College."

Stephen spent his whole schooling career at Dainfern College and was heavily involved in every aspect, from sport and culture to leadership and academics. He then went to Rhodes University to study journalism, where he was made a member of Golden

Key, achieved his B Journ with distinction and made the Dean's Honours List.

He is adamant that the education he received at Dainfern College was a key factor in his success at university. "We were encouraged to get involved in all aspects offered at the College and this taught me the valuable skills of time management and prioritisation as well as the incalculable value of a holistic approach to life. The commitment of the staff was also a key factor as they ensured that every student was supported and encouraged."

Paige Pollard agrees. "After school, I studied a BSc in Occupational Therapy at Wits, my first choice of university. I remember in Matric how anxious I was that I would not achieve the Life Sciences mark I needed to secure my spot in the degree course as only 60 students were accepted each year. I made these concerns clear to my teachers at the time and, with their dedication and commitment, my final exam result improved by over 10%. Getting into the degree course was the first

step towards my dream and I owe Dainfern College a huge thank-you for this. I am now very excited to be starting my career in the field of adult physical rehabilitation at Cambridge University Hospital in England."

Dainfern College Principal, Matthew Davies, comments: "It is always a proud moment when we see our students get into their universities of choice and go on to achieve significant success in their chosen careers. Our membership of the international Round Square association of schools as well as the addition of Cambridge A-levels has added further value to our educational offer."

"When looking at our matriculants across the past 18 years, It is so affirming to see that our key drivers of innovation, internationalism and leadership within a holistic environment have given them the knowledge, experiences, skills and values to take their place in the world as confident and inspired young leaders. We do indeed give them a world of education... and an education for the world."

For further information about Dainfern College, please contact marketing manager Mrs Deidré Proxenos at 011 469 0635 or dproxenos@dainferncollege.co.za.





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Meet RISING STAR, SKYE THEMEDA GOSS



Skye Goss is grateful for the opportunities that her school has given her over the past 12 years.

Recently chosen as her school's Head Girl for 2020, Skye Goss is a vibrant communicator and polished public speaker, always ready to take on challenges with a positive attitude. She says that, through kindness and empathy, she aims to inspire others and guide them in a non-threatening way, as a servant leader.

Ann Arnott chatted to Skye about her past achievements and her aspirations for the future.

AA: Congratulations on being chosen Head Girl of Dainfern College for 2020. What does that mean for you?

SG: I am really grateful for the opportunities that my school has given me over the past 12 years and I'm excited to be able to give back to the school that has cared for me so much. There are two initiatives that I, with the support of our leadership team, wish to implement for 2020: Firstly, to grow and support our #DainfernPride campaign. As a Dainfern College 'lifer' I take huge pride in this school. Here, we have a small enough student body that allows for a connectedness that forms the root of this institution. What makes our College special is each person knowing each other by name. We celebrate different cultures, personalities and perspectives. We respect and admire our teachers and friends who will not hesitate to offer a warm shoulder to cry on when they see you are in need of one. Secondly, I would like to encourage our seniors to be inspirational towards the younger grades. As seniors, we often lose touch with the role we play in their lives. It's important that we live up to their expectations. We must set a good example. They should be comfortable to come to us for guidance. I hope we will help to create memories that they will cherish their entire lives.

AA: I see you have lots of badges and scrolls on your blazer. They certainly reflect that you are an all-rounder. Can you tell us more about these achievements?

SG: Our school produces all-rounders that excel in all aspects of College life. My true love is founded on the school's cultural activities and I am especially proud to have received school honours for Performing Arts this year. I also have full colours for music and the performing arts as well as a Prestige Award for my 4-year



The new Toyota Supra, a rising star's dream car.

commitment to public speaking. Although I participated in a wide variety of sport activities like athletics, girls' soccer and netball up to Grade 9, I never found a sport that I enjoyed or was good at. Through wanting to keep healthy and fit as well as spend time with my friends I joined water polo and swimming towards the end of Grade 9. I never thought I would ever commit to a sport, let alone aquatics, but I truly did fall in love with being in the water. I have since been awarded team scrolls for both.

AA: Tell us more about how and when your passion for the Performing Arts was born?

SG: At age 3 and a half I watched my older brother's Grade 1 school concert at Dainfern College. My mom tells the story best and says I was mesmerised and sat staring at the stage for a full 2 hours. Afterwards I turned to her and asked if I could go and sit on the stairs by the stage. That night, driving home, I told my mom that it was my dream to be on that stage. I joined a drama school at the age of 10, and in Grade 7, I took part in the South African Championships of the Performing Arts. I worked very hard preparing for the competition and won the overall junior award and a trip to Hollywood to compete as part of Team SA. I was blessed to win 3 gold medals in the US and this was a turning point for me. My school awarded me Junior Colours and I applied for and received a Cultural Scholarship from the College. I was fortunate to be awarded Full Gauteng Provincial Colours from the Gauteng Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation Department in 2015 and 2016.

AA: That is such an inspirational story. In terms of leadership, have you always known you wanted to be a leader?

SG: Through my passion for the Performing Arts, I have learned that hard work is essential and that it beats talent almost every time. Performing has given me confidence to talk in front of an audience, and taught me the value of being professional, disciplined and a team player. Performing has also taught me that you don't win all the time and I've been humbled more than a few times! Then, I joined the President's Award programme in 2017 and volunteered to participate as a leader at the 2019 Round Square Baraza Junior Conference. It was here that I realised how much I value and appreciate being someone that others look up to for guidance and support. Post the conference I made up my mind to apply for my school's leadership programme. To me it did not matter which leadership role I got, I wanted to lead by example and be a role model for the younger kids who crossed paths with me. I believe it is not the

title or position that makes the leader, it's how much kindness and servant leadership the leader is willing to put into their duty. In September, our head boy, Matthew Pretorius and I attended a Leadership Camp hosted by the Rotary Club along with fellow heads of 35 Gauteng-based schools. This gave us an opportunity to connect with future leaders and make friends from all over.

AA: It's wonderful to see that you are engaging fully in life. But how have all of these activities affected your academic performance?

SG: In Grades 8 and 9 I battled as I did not enjoy all my academic subjects. I would rather sit on stage reciting monologues or writing a play than study or do homework. However, at home, I was never pressured to achieve high academic marks. My parents knew my passion and focus was always the Performing Arts, so I grew up knowing I have their full support and I became independent at a young age which allowed me to follow my own path. It was only in Grade 10 that I discovered I had the capacity to do it all - I could still perform, participate in sport and maintain good grades. I actually walked away with 2 Subject Awards at the end of last year! This year, I have managed to increase my percentage to over 80%, with distinctions in 5 of my 8 subjects. May I add this bit of advice to students: It is very important to work hard but don't ever put so much pressure on yourself academically that you miss out on the joys of high school life. Over the years I have participated in the school's acapella group and choir, the annual school dance and even sang and played drums in our band. I've directed a play and have starred in various plays. I'm also passionate about the community and outreach work. One just needs to find balance and as the saying goes, if you want something done, give it to a busy person.

AA: The diversity of your activities also means you have quite a wide choice of directions that you can take your career after school. What are your main career objectives?

SG: The stage is my home from home and I'm fulfilled when I entertain and inspire. I plan to explore this as a full time professional career option post matric and am currently attending ballet and voice lessons as one needs to be skilled in many spheres to make a living in the musical theatre industry. This will allow me to travel the world and meet people from different cultural backgrounds. I am fascinated by how unique our planet is and want to soak up as much of it as possible. At the end of the day I hope to use my passion to share kindness and bring joy to the audience.

AA: Skye, well done on all your many achievements to date! From EIA Publishing and the team at Dainfern Precinct Living magazine, we wish you a fantastic 2020. May it be your springboard for an amazing future!



Skye with her latest awards, the Annelize Hicks Trophy for the Highest Drama Achievement and the Coetzee-Gaffney Trophy for Culture.



BUILDING A NEW DRIVER'S SELF CONFIDENCE



At 17 years of age, a young person can apply for their Learner's Licence and, depending on their date of birth, may well have a Driver's Licence while still at school. No other moment during school marks a shift towards freedom quite like this.

BY SIMON CRANE, DEPUTY HEAD - HERONBRIDGE COLLEGE

Schools are traditionally places of rules. Bells ring and lessons start and, with that, pupils and teachers move to specific venues at specific times. It's very much like traffic and, to some degree, we move around a school campus in an automated system that ensures everybody goes to the next venue smoothly and without a glitch.

A good school works to eliminate the robotic nature of this system and excellent teachers find ways to thwart the system so that creativity is injected into what can be a dry routine.

A good school also sees every aspect as playing a part in the holistic nature of education and, as teachers, we see the process of securing a Driver's Licence as being part of the growth of the individual. It's not removed from the wider process of education, but rather it is an integral part of it.

Consider how a move from Grade 8 to Grade 9 is met with a slight loosening of the reins as a pupil moves into a more senior grade. Consider the subject choices that are made at the end of one's Grade 9 year, signalling a more specific focus on one's academic development.

Consider how a DigiDay - where our pupils have a scheduled day to work from home, to assist them in preparation for the self-monitored life after school - allows for a pupil to self-regulate.

Consider how the Valediction ceremony marks the formal transition from the end of school.

In the same way, a Driver's Licence is part of that process of growing up, taking responsibility and making good choices. On a practical note, at HeronBridge, we require pupils to park in an area close to the

school's entrance/exit that avoids their driving near other pupils. We have many pedestrians on campus and the minimising of potential risk is always behind such decisions.

We monitor and safeguard through the requirement to produce a physical copy of the Licence that must be handed to our Front Office. Our on-campus security team and staff are vigilant with regard to ensuring sound driving happens when our pupils arrive and leave campus. In so doing, we make sure that we play our part in reducing risk and safeguarding our young women and men.

What I have noticed in my daily commute in and out of school is the moment when, in my rear-view mirror, I see a pupil driving the car behind me. I take note of who the pupil is, and I observe their driving. And then, when I see them walking on campus later in the day, I tell them how well they are driving and I see their confidence climb.

Driving is just like anything else we do. When we are encouraged, we do better. When our self-confidence is built, enhanced and grown, we do better.

And so, just as a good school builds the confidence of the pupils in their academic, sporting and cultural arms, so a good school looks to the wider roles we play in society and strives to ensure that all who leave the gates at the end of their schooling, feel encouraged, nurtured and ready for life.



The Toyota GR Supra posing elegantly here with Skye Goss, next to the river at Dainfern Valley Estate

TOYOTA GR SUPRA

BY ALAN ROSENMEYER

There have been cars throughout motoring history that could be described as legends, but then a few go on to achieve cult status. The Toyota Supra definitely falls into this category.

First launched in 1978, 4 generations were produced through to 2002, with the last (A80) version still fresh in the memories of petrol heads worldwide. This was a car that allowed endless modification of both body and engine to absolute extreme levels.

During a long gestation period of the new A90 version, many purists were shocked to hear of twins in development that were separated before birth. Toyota were determined to continue the Supra bloodline of a straight 6 engine under a long bonnet

With its sporty good looks, the Toyota Supra is the perfect accessory for the up-and-coming jet set.



The interior is largely German, too, with some Toyota cues

with rear wheel drive. They found a natural partner in BMW who had worked long and hard at the same formula. And so, the non-identical twins were conceived. The platform was co-developed, the engine and drivetrain were from the German parent. The interior is largely German, too, with some Toyota cues. Then came the separate development. BMW will be convertible only and the tin-top is reserved for the Supra . . . big cheer from the performance purists. Chassis tuning and handling specifications were also the responsibility of the separate teams.

Enter the A90 Supra coupe. Long bonnet and short tail in the best traditions. Flowing lines and WIDE rear haunches. Low and sleek. Everything about the styling screams sports coupe.

The 3L straight 6 with turbo provides 250kW and 500Nm to give electrifying performance to accompany the superb handling. (I had the opportunity of a few laps around the Kyalami Race Track to prove this fact).

Of course, the question is how practical is the Supra for everyday use? The BMW-sourced 8-speed automatic transmission is ultra smooth and can be docile in traffic. But you can awaken the beast within by simply pressing the SPORT button alongside the gear shifter. The standard sports seats are very comfortable and electrically adjusted once you have eased yourself in. However, entry and egress could be a touch ungainly!

The GR version Supra comes with all the luxuries and specifications that one would expect, largely from BMW, so they're all to the highest standards. Another surprise is the very large 294L luggage space under the rear hatch.

First and foremost, this is a car for driving. The on-road experience certainly delivers in every aspect. Then you just have to look at it - beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, but I personally believe they have it spot-on.

The current list price is R 1 082 300,00.



Another surprise is the very large 294L luggage space under the rear hatch.



MERCEDES-BENZ V250D

BY ALAN ROSENMEYER

The Mercedes V Class may have started life as a passenger version of a delivery vehicle, but in true Mercedes tradition, it has steadily morphed and been improved into a luxury passenger transporter capable of long distance travel for up to 7 passengers.



Our test period with the V250d was a bit different to our usual regime. The need for comfortable transport for three people from Jozi to Pietermaritzburg for a weekend was kindly assisted by Mercedes-Benz SA providing this vehicle.



Powered by the tried and tested 2,1L turbo diesel engine and a very smooth 7-speed automatic transmission, it made easy work of the long distance cruise while returning fuel economy of 7,8L/100km. This is truly exceptional for a vehicle of this size and comfort. The Avantgarde spec level means that absolutely every possible luxury is included and some of the many special features of this vehicle are heated cup-holders, a fridge compartment in the centre console, two 'Captain's Chairs' in the middle row that can face forward or backward, a large Panoramic roof, dual sunroofs, active cruise control, and many, many more.

Speaking of the active cruise control feature, we made great use of this on the trip, leaving it to the sensors to safely adjust the speed according to the vehicle in front of us. It then accelerated back to the set speed when the road was clear ahead.

Overall, the V250 certainly provided a relaxed and exceptionally comfortable long-distance experience with masses of loading space to carry the goods we needed on the trip.

Top luxury finishes and the typical quality that one would expect from Mercedes and from a vehicle in this price category certainly did not disappoint at any stage.

Priced at R1 253 627 with a 5 year/100 000km full maintenance plan included, it may not be cheap, but it certainly is travelling in style.



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TIME FOR ACTION!

BY IZABELLA GATES, AUTHOR AND MD
OF LIFE TALK FORUM



Empowering young people to make life-enriching choices; inspiring families to thrive.

It's time for action! It's time to start building the country (and the life) we dream of. With huge challenges in the spotlight, isn't it time to focus our energy on what we want, and not on what we don't want? What you feed and focus your energy on is what grows – so shouldn't we feed what we want to grow?

The tug-of-war we face daily has been accelerating, the challenges are amassing and their strength sometimes appears overwhelming. Crime, gender violence, corruption, unemployment, xenophobia . . . the list goes on . . . so what do we do?

Let's 'unpack' the tug-of-war, and the two teams. In fact, let's refer to it as the tug-of-life because our end-goal is to have Life. Quality, fulfilling, happy Life. The Challenger team (all the bad stuff) is powerful and tugging with great gusto, but they will quickly be disempowered if we harness enough Galvanizers (the invaluable aspects and actions that get our life to where we want it) to tug for us.

So what are the Galvanizers we need to harness? How do we even start to disempower the violence and other negatives that are on the go? The best place to start is with ourselves. How do we envision our Goal Person? (What's our best self and the positive outcomes we strive for?)

Then let's look at our Goal Family, Goal Career, Goal Community and ultimately, our Goal Country. What do we want to achieve and be respected and remembered for? Do we want peace, love at the core of everyone's actions, well-being and prosperity for all? What Galvanizers will get us there?

Identifying the Galvanizers is easy. Remembering to harness them daily needs focus. Love, honesty, kindness, forgiveness, proactive parenting, fidelity in marriage,



self-discipline, tolerance, patience, generosity, diligence, best efforts (and hundreds of others) all await to be put to daily use.

If the Challengers are to be flattened, there's no time to be wasted on wallowing in self-pity, being in victim-mode or coming up with an array of excuses. The Galvanizers need to operate at peak effectiveness so all our energy needs to go to honing their power.

So how do we build our Galvanizers into powerful Challenger-flatteners? Starting with ourselves, let's look at some of the things we could do:

- **Harness love, a potent Galvanizer.** How can we show love to everyone around us, every day? How would it feel to react with kindness and compassion to each person we come into contact with?
- **Harness honesty.** Only speaking the truth. Not doing anything dishonest. Not cheating, not stealing, not engaging in an affair. How would that be?
- **Harness patience.** Breathing deeply and sending rays of love towards anyone who stresses us.
- **Harness diligence and quality work.** Doing our best and delivering top productivity and results.
- **Harness proactive parenting.** Striving to be a positive role-model at all times; enhancing communication; having family mealtimes regularly; making time for family activities; loving; laughing; engaging.
- **Harness boundaries and self-discipline.** Taking time to define the line we won't cross.
- **Harness God.** For those who

believe in a Creator, this presents a most powerful Galvanizer.

• **Harness healing.** If trauma, bitterness, anger or past hurts exist, you can bring release and healing through counselling/therapy.

• **Harness thoughts and choices.** Ask: "Are my choices leading me towards, or away from, my Goal Person (Goal Relationships, Goal Country...)"

Imagine if all of us (including our leaders) tried a Galvanizer-focused approach. Challengers would fade away, and love, tolerance, honesty, hope and prosperity would flourish. Families and businesses would thrive. Young people would make life-enriching choices and their future would be filled with possibility and opportunity.

A Utopian dream? No! It's a choice! What will each one of us choose to do? What will our leaders choose? If we want to steer our future, the time to decide and act is now!



For more information about Life

Talk's workshops and talks that address the challenges faced by teens (and by parents), visit www.lifetalk.co.za

LEG VEIN SURGERY

Reviewing the latest medical innovation

With comments by Dr YV Popov, MD, FCS (SA), Specialist Surgeon, with expertise in phlebology and founder of the Medi-Clinic Morningside Vein Clinic



Before and After Radiofrequency Ablation



Before and After Sclerotherapy

“It has been over five years that the Medi-Clinic Morningside’s Vein Clinic has been established. Having performed hundreds of cases with a better response than I could have ever imagined, it is a wonder why traditional methods are still being used for standard cases.”
-Dr YV Popov

Chronic Venous Disease, Venous Reflux and Venous Hypertension are commonly occurring and interrelated conditions caused by factors such as genetic inheritance, obesity and pregnancy. These affects both sexes, more commonly, women, standing professionals and older people.

These diseases affect primarily the superficial vein system (the Saphenous System). The major cause of Varicose Veins is Venous Reflux disease of the Great Saphenous vein, a vein that runs from the ankle to the groin in each leg. Ensuring one-directional flow upwards toward the heart, approximately 20 one-way valves within the vein prevent the blood from going back down, in the wrong direction, towards the feet. Venous Reflux disease is caused by the incompetence of these valves. This then causes blood to

congregate and results in the vein bulging and ulceration. Once this vein is diseased, we call it a Varicose Vein.

TREATMENT

An assessment using a Duplex Doppler ultrasound of the legs is performed in the doctor’s rooms. The leg veins are measured, charted and any reflux of the veins is ascertained. Based on the diagnosis, an individualistic approach to treatment can then be recommended. The Gold-Standard treatment, the minimally-invasive endovascular Radiofrequency Ablation of the varicose veins is a medical triumph in surgery with the lowest reoccurrence rate of less than 1%.

Dr YV Popov, MD, FCS (SA), Specialist Surgeon with over 5 years’ expertise in phlebology and the founder of the Medi-Clinic Morningside Vein Clinic, performs the Radiofrequency Ablation procedure in a sterile



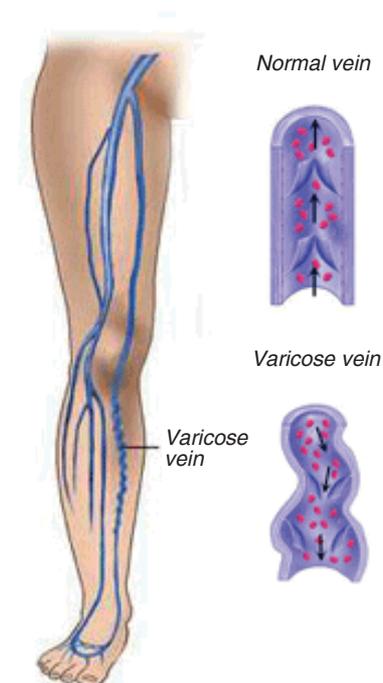
Dr Popov

Venous disease. [Note: compression stockings will not reverse or correct venous disease.]

COSMETIC TREATMENT

A month or two after Radiofrequency Ablation, some additional cosmetic treatment may be recommended. The reason why we wait a couple of months before intervening with cosmetic treatment is because some of these veins may disappear by themselves after the main 'feeder' vein is treated. Dr Popov will use a combination of Sclerotherapy and Thermocoagulation microneedling to treat these veins. Cosmetic treatment is also available for patients who only have a cosmetic condition. A variation of sclerotherapy, known as Foam Sclerotherapy, has a medicinal application to larger varicosities contributing to the Superficial Vein System and its disease.

Mrs Sterfontein, 64, who had the procedure performed in 2016, commented that her legs are, "much better and feel lighter" and she enjoys an improved quality of life. Ms Oosthuysen, 25, who suffered with aches and swelling of the legs has stated that, "the swelling has stopped completely," and Mrs Banda, 49, who suffered with similar symptoms, said after having the procedure performed in 2017 that, "there is no more swelling or heaviness so it has helped a lot."



environment under local anaesthesia and in the comfort of his doctor's rooms. The vein is accessed via the same channel used to inject the local anesthetic and a catheter is inserted into the vein to deliver radiofrequency, a 'heat' energy, to treat it. The vein is sealed off and a compression bandage is used to further compress it for the following 48 hours. The patient returns home immediately after the procedure and mild cardiovascular exercise is encouraged from the very next day.

Dr Popov and his team have used several systems to perform this procedure, including the VNUS and FCare systems, and have refined the method to incorporate the latest technology.

Most medical aids cover this procedure from core benefits. Various campaigns by doctors and medical aid schemes have been initiated to educate GPs about this procedure so that they can correctly refer patients for treatment and it is finally gaining momentum.

Mr Baillie, 75, after having battled with stubborn venous ulcers for some years before he first consulted at the Medi-Clinic Morningside Vein Clinic, conveyed his sincerest gratitude for the treatment. These conditions only had a few treatment options available previously, such as the stripping procedure, or the daily use of compression stockings to slow down the progression of

Although some patients have reported some pain and/or discomfort during the Radiofrequency Ablation procedure, due to tolerance to the local anesthetic, 95% of patients have tolerated the procedure well and have reported excellent results.

FOLLOW-UP VISITS

The first follow-up after Radiofrequency Ablation takes place 48 hours after the procedure is performed. Dr Popov removes the bandaging and observes the closed vein with the ultrasound. The chances of the vein being open after ablation are nil-to-less-than-1%.

Cardiovascular walking of approximately an hour daily is encouraged from the day following surgery, to help any vein stiffness, which can manifest as a slight pulling or tugging sensation. This sensation may be experienced for 2 - 3 weeks after the procedure, as the great Saphenous Vein loses its elasticity, becoming inelastic after it is ablated and rather like a cord under the surface of the skin. Even though the vein is immediately flattened, its shell remains in the leg for some time before being fully absorbed by the body.

For more information, contact Dr Popov on 011 784 2804, or e-mail: info@veintreatments.co.za. Address: Suite 200, Medi-Clinic Morningside, Cnr Rivonia and Hill Roads, Morningside.





HOME DÉCOR EXPO 2019

Showcasing the Latest in Interior Design and Décor

Powered by Century Property Developments and Houss, Home Décor Expo 2019 invites you to The Precinct Luxury Apartments, situated in Midrand, on 2 - 3 November and 9 - 10 November 2019.

Started in 2012, with shows held at prestigious locations such as The Sheds @ Waterfall and The Hills Game Reserve Estate, the Home Décor Expo has served as the heart of elegance, luxury and style. Throughout the years, the top talents in interior design and décor have been provided with a blank canvas and tasked with the creative challenge of decorating and styling various homes and spaces, utilising products provided by South Africa's top furniture and homeware companies.

The public is then invited to attend these showings where they can view the latest in house designs and trends, while also being able to purchase the products on display. It is an opportunity for visitors to interact and engage with these interior spaces in a residential environment that truly sets this expo apart from others.

Previous Home Décor Expos have been hosted in larger, freestanding houses, but this year's 'Apartment Edition' at The Precinct Luxury Apartments, is all about the combination of luxury, affordability and modern living. Visitors will witness how it is possible to achieve style, sophistication and the maximum utilisation of limited space.

Twelve of South Africa's top interior designers and decorators have been challenged to design the ultimate apartment interior – from bedrooms

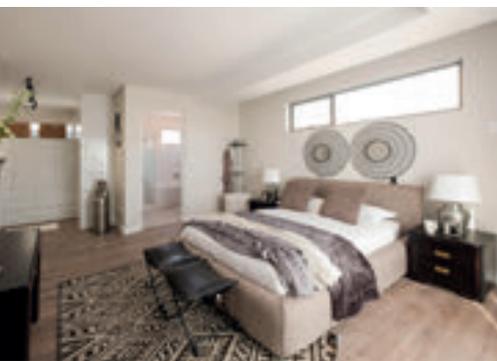
and bathrooms to patios, kitchens and lounges. Each decorator was carefully selected for their specific design approach – such as modern chic, classical, opulent and minimalist style. They will utilise products, sourced by themselves or manufactured by premium companies from within South Africa and around the world, to furnish and decorate the units. In addition, businesses and entrepreneurs from the Riversands Incubation Hub will participate and showcase their offerings.

The Precinct Luxury Apartments' luxurious and upmarket units demonstrate that estate living is the future. Featuring incomparable security and superior lifestyle options, without compromising on any of the glitz and glamour, all of the apartments featured will be available for rental, with units ranging from R6 800 to R14 400 per month.

As in previous years, all the décor and furniture on display will be available for purchase, and the relevant companies will be on site to answer any questions and provide applicable advice. Visitors will also have the opportunity to win highly sought-after products by voting for their favourite apartment.

Entrance to the Home Décor Expo 2019 is free and there is ample, secure parking for all – so discover elegance, luxury and style this November.

On Thursday, 31 October 2019, a by-invitation only VIP launch will be hosted at The Precinct Luxury Apartments, where guests can preview the units and find out more information about Home Décor Expo 2019, while enjoying an evening of elegance, luxury and style.



You can find out more by following Home Décor Expo updates on Instagram at @CenturyPropertyDevelopments.

HOME DECOR EXPO 2019

entrance is FREE !



- ▶ 12 of SA's *Top Interior Designers and Decorators* have been challenged to create 12 ultimate home interiors.
- ▶ The 12 apartments are located in *The Precinct Luxury Apartments*, which is next door to Waterfall Estates - just off Allandale Road.
- ▶ The *latest trends in house decor* will be on show, along with realistic costings for the main items on display.
- ▶ Show times are *09:00 to 17:00* with free entrance and fantastic prizes on offer.

2 - 3 NOV 2019
9 - 10 NOV 2019

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WORKING DOGS ALLOWED



Autism Support Dog



MORE ABOUT THE GUIDE-DOGS ASSOCIATION

The Guide-Dogs Association of South Africa is headquartered in Paulshof, where they have offices, a Puppy Block, kennels, a hall and training facilities.

Puppies are bred using the South African Guide-Dogs Association for the Blind's specially selected stock. They import the semen of proven working dog males from International Guide Dog Federation member organisations. The female candidates for breeding undergo a comprehensive veterinary check that includes blood tests, eye checks, X-rays and scans, to ensure that they are healthy and have the right temperament. Labrador Retrievers most consistently exhibit the desired characteristics of stability, initiative, docility, adaptability

Did you know, there are more than 1,5 million visually impaired people in South Africa? Fortunately, our constitution protects the rights of disabled and visually impaired people, however, that doesn't mean that they are always fairly treated. There have been times when these people, accompanied by their working dogs, have been denied access to public places.

On 3 October 2019, the Guide-Dogs Association of South Africa launched a campaign to educate the public and public service organisations and highlight the rights of working dogs. That might seem like a strange concept – but, yes, working dogs and their owners have rights!

A working dog is a dog that has been thoroughly trained and socialised in a very specific way to assist a person with a disability that may be physical, visual or developmental, (this includes quadriplegics as well as people with autism and other ailments that compromise their ability to function independently).

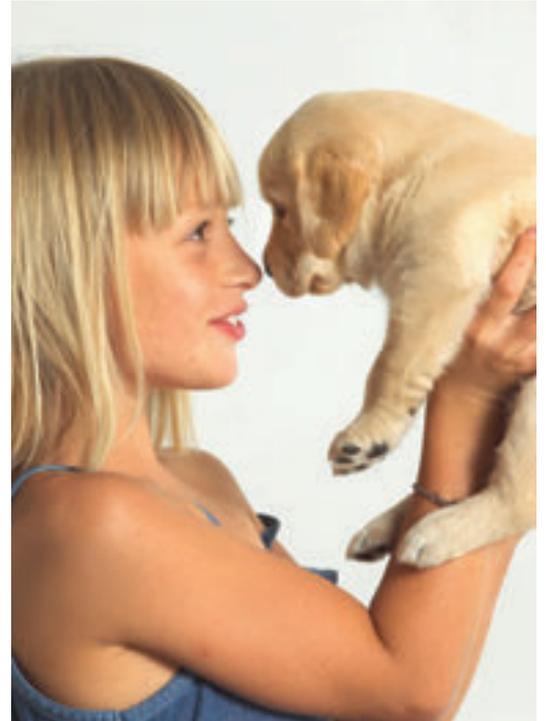
Both locally and internationally, there's legislation that protects the rights of working dogs and, should you - or the security guards protecting your premises - refuse access to a person and their working dog, you can be taken to court, with legal action brought against you.

"However, whilst we need to get the message across that people who are accompanied by working dogs have equal rights, we really would like to have a situation where we all work together for the benefit of everybody," says the Head of Public Relations for the Guide-Dogs Association of South Africa, Pieter van Niekerk, who is himself visually impaired.





Socialising puppies



and a robustness that helps them to deal with the demands of working in a variety of environments, but Golden Retrievers and German Shepherds are also sometimes used as valuable additions to the stock.

The artificial insemination is done at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital. To quote a few statistics: in the past year, 96 puppies were born; in the Puppy Block at the Paulshof headquarters, staff provided 8 760 hours of care to the pups and the moms; and 58 children completed their school community service hours volunteering there.

As part of the Puppy Raising Scheme, which was developed to provide the South African Guide-Dogs Association for the Blind with dogs that are well prepared for both advanced training and their future work as Guide, Service and Autism Support Dogs, the puppies are placed with their Puppy Raising families at around seven weeks of age. They are treated as part of these families for the next 12 – 18 months before being returned for more specialised training. Training, however, is not just restricted to the dogs. The association holds a number of workshops for visually impaired people and they offer a two-year practitioner diploma course to Orientation and Mobility trainees.

WITH MY GUIDE DOG BY MY SIDE, I CAN TAKE ON THE WORLD

Most able bodied people would have absolutely *no idea* just how much it means to visually impaired and disabled people



to have the blessing of a working dog to improve their lives. To quote Otilia Wigley, a visually impaired recipient of a guide dog: "There is no sighted person alive who would ever understand the complete trust, love, gratitude and companionship between a visually disabled person and their guide dog. My guide dog is a part of me and I am a part of her. She has given me back the self-confidence that I was so desperate to have restored."

WHAT DOES A GUIDE DOG HAVE TO LEARN?

One of the most important things that a puppy-in-training has to learn is to remain

calm and focused in the presence of distractions and remain with its owner.

The training is undertaken with a clicker and food rewards. During the months of its training, a guide dog is taught:

- Obedience (sit, down, stand, stay and recall).
- Guiding position (walking ahead and parallel to the handler).
- Straight line concept (the dog follows the natural curve of the path, avoids obstacles and returns to the original direction of travel).
- How to avoid obstacles (this includes height obstacles).
- Turns (the dog is taught to turn left, right

and back).

- To indicate steps up or down.
- To ignore distractions.
- To 'find' orientation points (find the kerb, find the step, find the escalator, find the door, find the crossing).
- To use lifts and escalators.
- To work safely in non-pavement conditions.
- Be aware of traffic and vehicles.
- To behave in an acceptable manner in all social situations.
- Assist with locating doors and doorways.

SERVICE DOGS

Service Dogs assist people who are physically disabled. They are taught the main tasks of retrieve, push and pull. These tasks are initially taught in their most basic form but as the dog progresses, the tasks become more complex. In the final stages of the dog's training, the instructor would practise tasks that are very similar to the tasks that the dog will perform when it is working with its owner.

A Service Dog should be able to:

- Retrieve a variety of items from a variety of locations.
- Assist with the opening and closing of doors, drawers, cupboards etc.
- Assist with switching on light switches.
- Locate a designated person on the property and indicate that its owner needs assistance.

- Take items to/fetch items from another person on the property.
- Bark on command.
- Walk next to the wheelchair in a controlled manner.

AUTISM SUPPORT

Autism Support Dogs are specially selected dogs that are trained to work with children with autism. The Autism Support Dog's primary role is to help with the tendency of children with autism to bolt or run off when distracted. The dog is controlled by a primary handler, usually a parent or caregiver. The dog wears a soft harness to which a lead is attached. The child holds this lead.

There are various added advantages in owning an Autism Support Dog including:

- Companionship for children who are often lonely due to their autism. Children with Autism generally don't enjoy social interaction, so the dog is an acceptable replacement for this.
- Improved confidence.
- Providing a physical presence which is needed in times of anxiety.
- Interaction, free from demands.

HOW CAN I HELP?

There are a variety of ways in which members of the public or private sector

can assist the Guide-Dogs Association of South Africa to change the lives, not only of people with visual impairment or disabilities, but of their families, as well. This includes signing up for a monthly debit order, volunteering your time by joining their Puppy Raising Scheme, sponsoring the training of one of their working dogs or an Orientation and Mobility trainee, or signing up to their Membership or Collar and Tie programmes.

The other very important way that you can help, if you are a business owner or employer, is to ensure that all security personnel and front line staff are properly informed and trained to respect the rights of working dogs and their owners, to afford them the dignity and equal rights that they deserve. Treating them with compassion and kindness will go a long way towards making our world a better place, too!

For more information about the Guide-Dogs Association of South Africa and the services offered, or to get involved, visit their website at www.guidedog.org.za, contact them at info@guidedog.org.za, or call 011 705 3512. You can also follow them on social media at Facebook: @SAGuideDogs / Twitter: @saguide_dogs / Instagram: @sa_guide_dogs.

THERE'S NOTHING ORDINARY ABOUT THESE DOGS

Did you know, a working dog is a dog that has been trained to assist the owner who has a disability, whether it is physical, visual or developmental. Working dogs are legally allowed in ALL public places (except ICU).



GUIDE DOGS

For the visually impaired, identified wearing a leather harness with a metal handle



SERVICE DOGS

For people with physical disabilities, identified wearing a red jacket with reflective strips and the GDA* logo



AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS

For children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, identified wearing a red jacket with reflective strips and the GDA* logo



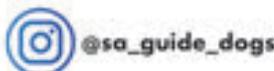
PUPPIES-IN-TRAINING

Work with Puppy Raisers to learn socialisation skills, identified wearing a blue collar and jacket with the GDA* logo

*S A Guide-Dogs Association

RIGHTS OF WORKING DOG OWNERS

There are both local and international legislations that protect the rights of working dogs and their owners. Should you refuse access and/or service to a person with a disability with their working dog, appropriate action in the Equality Court or other appropriate forums may be brought against you and/or your company.



PERU

MACHU PICCHU AND ITS BIRDLIFE

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SEARLE

Mist-enshrouded Machu Picchu



Left: Andean Lapwing
 Below: Female Giant Hummingbird
 Bottom: Juvenile Fasciated Tiger-Heron



Having booked a 2-week birding tour to Chile, a slight detour to Peru to satisfy a lifelong ambition to visit Machu Picchu, the world-famous archaeological site, was irresistible. And, of course, the extension of the detour by a day or two to sample the amazing birdlife was for me just as natural as day follows night.



Considered to be the best-preserved archaeological site in the world, a symbol of the Incan empire, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1983) and voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, Machu Picchu is located 80km north west of the city of Cusco. Cusco is itself of significant Incan archaeological interest. It's 2 400m above sea-level, in an environment of tremendous scenic beauty and is a citadel of mysterious origin and purpose, given that the Incas possessed no written language. It attracts researchers and tourists alike, from all over the world.

Built roughly in 1450 AD in the High Andes mountains, Machu Picchu is invisible from the Urubamba River 700m below, hence its preservation from the marauding Spanish Conquistadors. It was abandoned a mere 120 years later in 1572, for reasons unknown. It comprises of 150 buildings of sophisticated dry-stone walls including 3 temples, houses and baths, and a compound containing numerous flights of steps - most of these staircases were



Cusco Fortress – Sacsaybamba

*Right: Bearded Mountaineer
Below: Andean Goose family*



carved out of a single huge slab of granite. Apparently 400 - 500 people occupied the site. Its construction is fascinating as no wheels were used. They employed a method termed the ashlar technique in which massive granite blocks were polished and fashioned to fit together, fused without mortar so precisely that not even a knife-blade can fit between the blocks.

Re-discovered in 1911 by Yale professor, Hiram Bingham, Machu Picchu is often described as an astronomical observatory, with panoramic views, whose sacred Intihuatana Stone accurately indicates two equinoxes. Twice each year the sun, shining directly overhead, casts no shadow whatsoever. The plazas and residential areas are connected by walkways and thousands of steps to the surrounding agricultural terraces that at one time were watered by an aqueduct system. Some of these terraces were still in use by the local Quechua Indians at the time of Machu Picchu's re-discovery.



The Eastern slopes of the Andes and adjacent forelands in which Machu Picchu is located, are recognised as being the ornithologically richest area in the world with the highest number of bird species found at the equator, although an almost equal number are found in nearby Cusco and in North Bolivia. The Cusco and Machu Picchu areas have fortunately been protected because of the archaeological interest and it has become an ornithological safe-haven where many other elements of bio-diversity have been conserved as well. Over the centuries, the patterns of human settlement in Machu Picchu and the Vilcanota Valley may also have been conditioned by the predictable, benign climate of the area, further contributing to the presence of the many rare and endemic birds found there.

Despite a delayed departure from Johannesburg's Oliver Tambo Airport for my 15 hour flight via Sao Paulo in Brazil to Lima (1 550m above sea level), capital of Peru, I arrived on time, at almost midnight, on 13 November 2018, for an overnight stay in the Manhattan Inn Airport Hotel that

offered the very basics, a clean room with comfortable, essential bed.

Early the following morning before breakfast, I used my bedroom window which overlooked a tiny city park with scattered trees to do some birding, with Pacific Dove and Scrub Blackbirds spotted as lifers, an unexpected flock of a dozen or so Black Vultures circling overhead and a fly-by Harris's Hawk.

My mid-morning flight to Cusco (3 300m above sea level) was not, however, incident-free as my luggage was missing upon arrival. Frantic enquiries resulted in my suitcase luckily arriving an hour or so later, having been sent to some other conveniently close-by destination.

Upon meeting my birding and archaeological guide, José, and driver, Wilbur, I was whisked off for a delicious lunch of rainbow trout, rice and vegetables and then on to the Cusco Incan Fortress, Sacsayhuaman, which was fantastic. As in the case of Machu Picchu, but using

limestone instead of granite, the fortress construction is of massive (3 - 4m x 2m) boulders which have been shaped to perfection to fit in with the natural geography of the site, no mortar with absolute minimal spacing between blocks, ensuring maximum stability and preservation for many centuries to come. Again, however, the purpose of the fortress is unknown.

Then, for some birding, we visited a nearby farm dam where I recorded a number of specialities, including a family of Andean Geese, Andean Duck and Andean Coot. We then visited a small patch of Polylepis woodland to look for endemic birds (not found in any other country), and we spotted Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch, Creamy-crested Spinetail and Black-throated Flowerpiercer.

An hour's drive to Ollantaytambo (2 790m above sea level) for dinner was next on the agenda followed by a 2-hour train journey to Aguas Calientes. I arrived at midnight at the Waman Hotel for an overnight stay prior to my visit early the



Left: Andean Motmot
Below: Machu Picchu Gateway



following morning to the archaeological wonder that is Machu Picchu. It was a long but very eventful day, with 15 lifers seen!

Despite the inclement weather, (incessant drizzle interspersed with periods of torrential downpour), and clad in a poncho with and overhead brolly, my spirits were in no way dampened or diminished, permitting me to spend most of the next morning excitedly exploring and totally absorbing the running commentary of José. Even the iconic postcard image of the ruins shrouded in mist and drizzle was, for me, infinitely more memorable than would a sunny, clear day have been. It was an above-expectation, highly enjoyable experience of a lifetime!

Later, a walk in the rain in search of the endemic Inca Wren in the bamboo thickets growing along the margins of the world-famous Inca Trail was successful and the rest of the day was devoted to birding the Aguas Calientes area including the Urubamba River within the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Other endemics, the Green and White Hummingbird and uncommon Oleaginous Hemispingus, Thick-billed Euphonia and Silver-beaked Tanager were next on my growing life list. Sightings along the Urubamba, considered not uncommon but worthy in my view of mention, included the National Bird of Peru, the Andean Cock-

of-the-rock (this scarlet-coloured dandy is one of the birds listed in the publication called *100 Birds to See Before You Die* by D. Chandler and D. Couzens), seen in a mud cup-nest somehow attached to a large slab of rock overhanging the river; a striking female Torrent Duck; juvenile Fasciated Tiger-Heron; colourful Andean Motmot; prolonged views of a highly active White-capped Dipper (a small passerine equipped to dive for its aquatic diet of invertebrates, swim underwater using its wings for propulsion and even walk on the river/stream bottom); and a fly-by Andean Guan. The daylight return train journey to Ollantaytambo produced plentiful sightings of both male and female Torrent Ducks (one of the most attractive members of the duck family and confined to the rivers of South America) and a few White-capped Dippers - 21 lifers on this day!

An early departure the following morning for an hour-long drive to the incredible Abra Malaga Pass (4 316m above sea level) was achieved on time but, because of schedule constraints, I had not followed recommended and prudent acclimatisation procedures. Immediately after arrival, we set off uphill on a barely discernible track to a visible grove of gnarled and twisted *Polylepis* trees silhouetted against the skyline. The Peruvian authorities have fortunately recognised the precarious nature of this endangered woodland type in which a fair number of consequentially endangered bird species have also evolved and, in conjunction with the local Quechua community, have established conservation and regeneration procedures to protect the remnant patches of it.

Exhibiting a number of symptoms of altitude sickness, including breathlessness, rubbery legs and loss of balance, I battled my way up the incline to the Royal Cinclodes Path, named after a particularly rare (less than 200 individuals) and thus critically endangered endemic bird species of the *Polylepis* woodlands. Although we were successful in locating two *Polylepis* endemics, the White-browed Tit-Spinetail and White-tufted Sunbeam, as well as the rarely-recorded and colourful Giant Conebill, I very reluctantly, because of the altitude sickness, aborted the

search for the Royal Cinclodes and accepted that the species would not be appearing on my world-list.

We then continued over the Pass through puna grassland (Andean Lapwing) to Canchailloc (3 708m above sea level) birding our way downhill towards San Luis. Special attention was given to the areas of *Chusquea* bamboo found near the tree-line where another dozen or so habitat-specific bird species, including endemic Parodi's Hemispingus, were identified on our descent through outstanding scenery overlooked by the dominant glacier-ridden, snow-clad peak of Mt. Veronica. Domesticated dogs were surprisingly prolific as were the many human graves alongside the road, a sad reminder of the necessity for caution in negotiating the numerous and treacherous hair-pin bends associated with car travel in the foothills of the Andes mountains.

Finally, we visited the garden of a resort in Ollantaytambo for a feast of hummingbirds, amongst others. Close-up photographic opportunities abounded with the following more interesting species recorded, namely Giant Hummingbird, Band-tailed Seedeater, Greenish Yellow-Finch, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Andean Swift, Bare-faced Ground-Dove, and lastly, but certainly not least, the stunning Bearded Mountaineer, an endemic hummingbird which I consider my best sighting of the entire Chile/Peru trip. I subsequently discovered that this day yielded the highest number of lifers by far of the entire 19-day Chile/Peru trip, 37 in all.

My final day in Peru, with 10 lifers, got off to an early start with a visit to a couple of deep, blue lakes in the Cusco area, where we sighted Puna Teal and the many-coloured Rush Tyrant. This was followed by a rather longish drive to Soraypampa, the starting point of a tourist-walk to the stunning blue-green Salkantay glacier lake overlooked by spectacular snow-clad Andean peaks. Shortly after turning on to the road to Soraypampa, we were blessed with the overhead appearance of what is often referred to as the 'world's biggest bird of prey' the magnificent Andean Condor which, with its wingspan in excess of 3m, (yet another of the *100 Birds to See Before you Die* entries) epitomises the high Andes. The habitat at our destination was puna grassland, punctuated by patches of *Polylepis* woodland, which quickly yielded 3 endemics: diminutive and secretive Vilcabamba Tapaculo, localised and striking Apurimac Brushfinch and Marcapata Spinetail.

It was then back to Cusco for a final night at the Llipimpac Hotel after an action-packed, most enjoyable and unforgettable 5-day visit to Peru to explore spectacular Machu Picchu and find 83 lifers.

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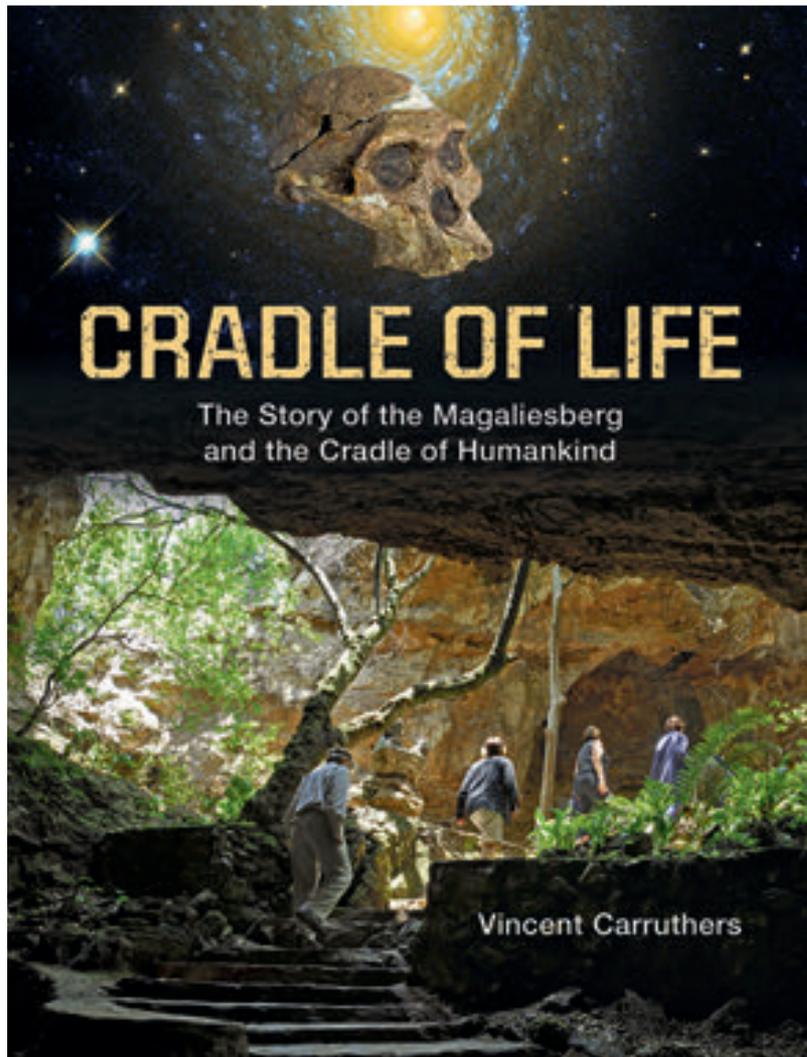
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CARRUTHERS ROCKS THE CRADLE

BY JAMES CLARKE

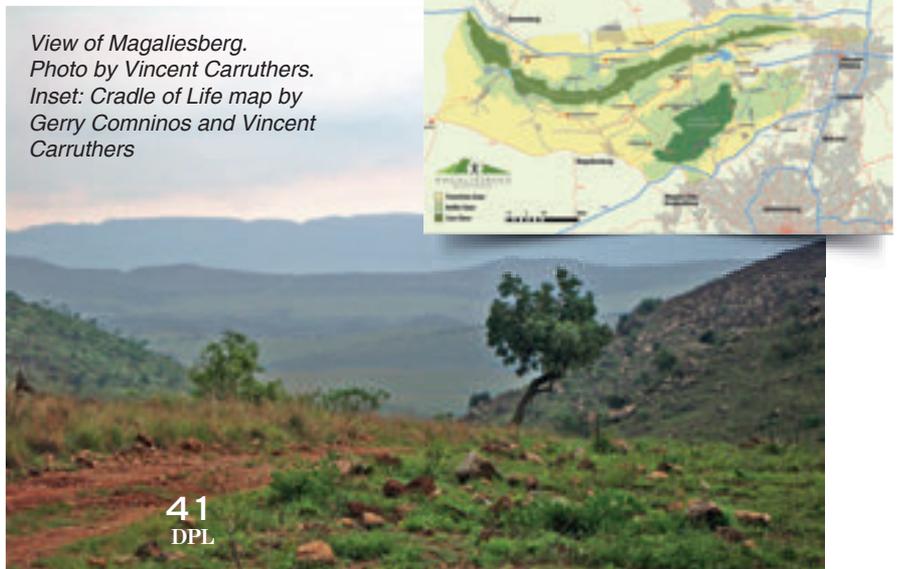
For anybody interested in human history and pre-history, the region just north of Gauteng provides a fundamental experience. It has, in recent years,

consistently revealed secrets that go back to the beginning, not just of human life, but of the events that led to humankind's genesis in Africa. *Cradle of Life - the story of the Magaliesberg and the Cradle of Humankind* (Struik Nature), portrays this region and its story holistically and with enthusiasm. It is heroic in its scope, brilliant in design and easily digestible.

The author, Vincent Carruthers, whose name is synonymous with the Magaliesberg, has selected some spectacular photographs, as well as commissioned maps and graphics – about 500 illustrations in all – to produce something that is

almost encyclopaedic though neatly chronological. More importantly, the layout offers so much to excite the eye that one is compelled to browse – to dash from one section to another, before going back and starting at the beginning.

*View of Magaliesberg.
Photo by Vincent Carruthers.
Inset: Cradle of Life map by
Gerry Comninos and Vincent
Carruthers*



There's an attractive landscape which, in my view, is not only South Africa's most interesting few square kilometres, but, as a tourist's 'must see', deserves higher ranking than Egypt's Pyramids, Peru's Machu Picchu or Italy's Ancient Rome.

Part One examines the 'Life and Landscape' of the region, starting with the Big Bang, the making of the universe, up to the first breath of life.

The geology of the Cradle/Magaliesberg region and the time span of the events that formed it have, for the layman (like me), never been easy to comprehend and I can only admire Carruthers for having so clearly sorted it for us.

The Magaliesberg/Cradle area lies in the centre of what is known as the Kaapvaal Craton – a chunk of the earth's crust that stretches from Southern Botswana down to the Karoo. This dome of land on which Pretoria and Johannesburg stand was Planet Earth's first permanent landmass. It emerged 3-billion years ago from the sea that entirely covered the planet. Volcanic islands would have previously popped up out of the sea but they would have rapidly (in geological terms) eroded away.

The Magaliesberg reveals almost the entire story of life on earth. As one walks along the slabs of rock that cap its summit, one sees undisturbed tidal ripples – the bed of that primordial sea.



Sediba skeleton by Marina Elliott



Sediba skull by Marina Elliott

Ripples undisturbed, because 3-billion years ago, there were no creatures to disturb them. Planet Earth was barren, the air unbreathable.

Part Two ('Human evolution') describes the happenings in the rocky landscape below the Magaliesberg's south-facing facade - the Cradle of Humankind. This is where humans evolved. This is where scientists are finding, on a regular basis in the dolomitic caves that honeycomb this World Heritage site, the fossilised remains of our ancestors from the 'ape men' to humans.

When it comes to our origins, the Cradle has so much to tell us. Carruthers now narrows down the time scale from thinking in billions of years to just the last few million years which suddenly seem like 'recently'. The book reviews the sequence of events that followed that period when hominids and the apes divided, leaving chimps to go their way and us to go the other. The story is all there in the Cradle, written on cavern walls which sometimes gleam with fossilised bones.

This is the area that has, in recent years, startled the world with new discoveries leading to new insights into human evolution. It has propelled many scientists into worldwide fame beginning in the 1930s when Robert Broom, a general practitioner with an interest in fossils, used dynamite in the Cradle - to the horror of scientists - to blast away some rock to discover the first adult skull of an ape man. His find, and those that have followed in the Cradle, stunned the crowd at the British Museum who'd pinned their scientific careers on a skull - a crude hoax as it turned out - the Piltdown Skull which, for 40 years, led them to believe the missing link was a big-brained Englishman.

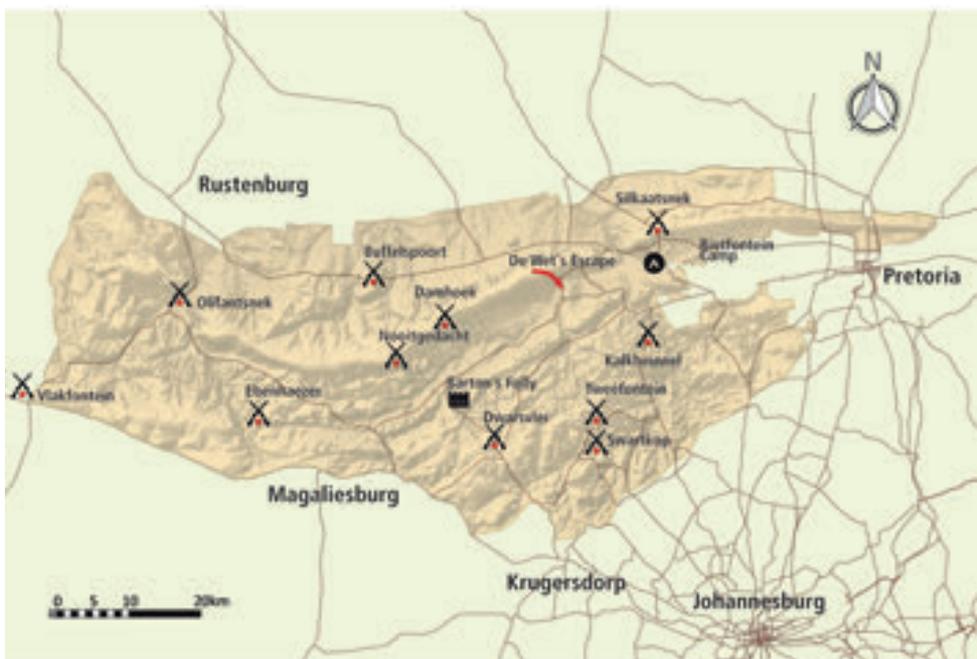
The Cradle is the happy hunting ground for famous paleoanthropologists such as professors Bob Brain, Phillip Tobias, Ron Clarke and Lee Berger, and

their students who, in recent years, have turned the study of the human evolution on its head. If you've been a little confused about their recent finds (*Australopithecus sediba* and *Homo naledi*) here is a delightful way to catch up with, possibly, the most comprehensively illustrated exposition available to the public.

Part Three deals with the boisterous history of the humans in the golden grasslands of the Magaliesberg/ Cradle hills. It takes the reader through the last 1,2 million years - from the Stone Age through to the Iron Age, whose crumbled settlements and furnaces are still there to see. The book looks at the wars that swished about these valleys when black fought black and white fought white and where miners burrowed into the hills, smashing stalagmites and stalactites - and fossils - for the limestone that helped build Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Cradle of Life is a gem of modern publishing - and I could not help thinking, as I became swallowed up by the narrative and the pictures, that there's no way the electronic media can compete with this class of book - so easy to hold, so compact, so navigable, so enthralling to read at one's own pace, and so handsome an object to leave lying around for the family or one's visitors to browse.

By the way, Vincent Carruthers is the author of the 1990 best-selling *The Magaliesberg* which is still in print after almost 30 years.



War map





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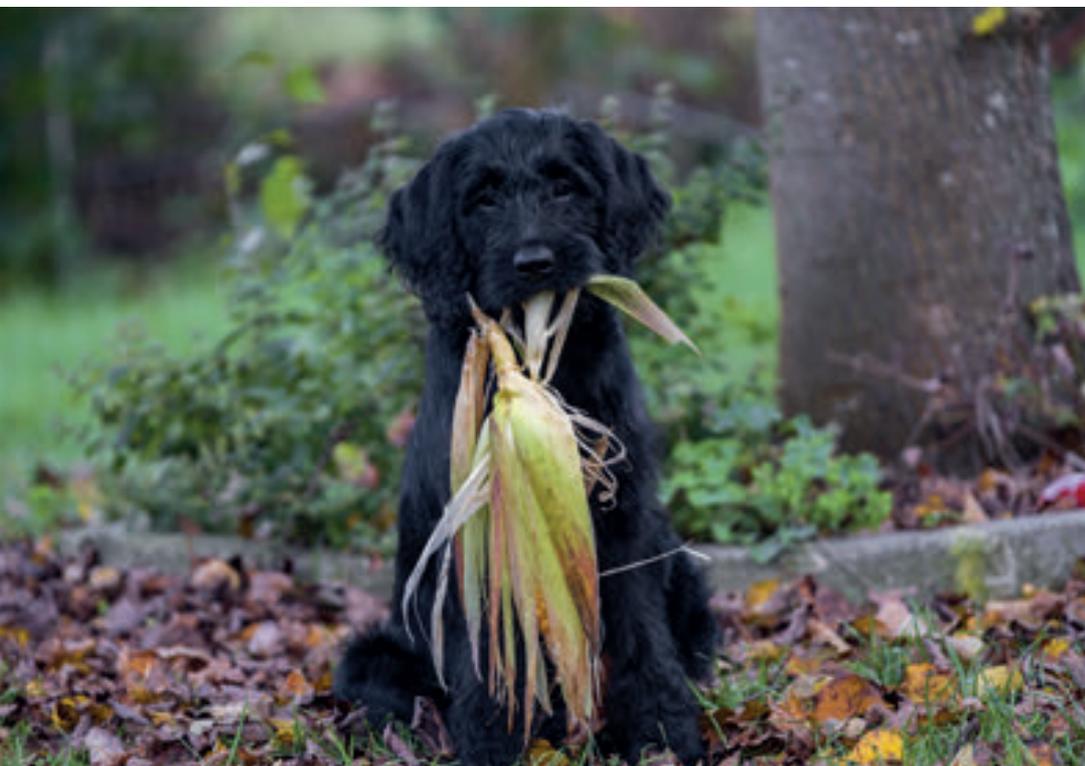
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TIME TO GET OFF THE NO-GRAIN TRAIN?





Do grain-free 'boutique', home-cooked or raw diet options provide complete and properly balanced nutrition for dogs and cats?

In recent years, we've seen a growing trend with regards to pet parents seeking out grain-free, 'boutique', home-cooked or raw diet options for their dogs and cats. While this may sound like a good idea, since grains did not make up part of our pets' ancestors' diets in the wild, is it really a good idea to flout decades-worth of dietary research into the benefits of grains for domestic animals? Furthermore, alarming reports have come out from the USA Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding the potential damage to our fur-babies that 'boutique', exotic and grain-free diets (collectively termed BEG diets) can do.

I THOUGHT 'BOUTIQUE' WAS A FANCY CLOTHING STORE

Boutique diets, (so termed because they are currently in vogue and the food is generally produced by smaller companies), may include a variety of types of pet foods, including grain-free, holistic, raw, home-cooked and vegan ingredients. Due to their relatively recent appearance, these products do not have the backing of extensive research that the popular veterinary premium brands do. They aren't always formulated together with a certified veterinary nutrition expert and these smaller companies cannot afford to run the exorbitantly expensive food trials that give the bigger manufacturers' products such scientific credence. Apart from the fact that many boutique products are not even registered as Complete and Balanced (meaning that they provide all the essential nutrients for the relevant species to survive and can be fed exclusively as a health-promoting diet for pets), they haven't been

around long enough for us to know what their health would be like in their old age, etc.

Even more alarming is that few, if any, of these brands and products are registered with official safety regulatory boards, like the Pet Food Industry Association of Southern Africa (PFI), or the American Association of Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) in the US, for example. These safety 'watchdogs' ensure that all pet foods, regardless of whether they're available in the veterinary or grocery sectors, are safe and comply with the fundamental nutritional requirements for the health and well-being of our furry friends.

EXOTIC? LIKE A PIÑA COLADA?

Exotic diets refer to those that contain ingredients not normally associated with commercially produced pet foods, eg. bison, tilapia, wild boar, red lentils and the like. These ingredients might sound like something off the menu at an exclusive restaurant but they, too, are broken down into the same nutritional building blocks for our pets' bodies as the more common pet food ingredients.

Human grade poultry products, for example, are far more sustainably produced, reasonably priced for consumers, excellent protein sources and they do the very same things in the body as exotic ingredients that cost an arm and a leg, decimate natural ecosystems and have to be transported from the other side of the planet.

The handful of pets that are troubled by standard pet food ingredients like chicken

and beef may benefit from a switch to other novel, yet far from exotic, ingredients like lamb or ostrich. Why pay way more for a product that is not backed by sufficient veterinary nutritional research, isn't sustainably produced and isn't registered with a pet nutrition safety regulator, just because it got a high rating on the latest trendy online webpage, that isn't necessarily run by a pet nutrition expert? Because everything we read on the internet is true, right?

Another point to ponder is that if these pricey ingredients are present in higher quantities in the food than can be utilised by our animals' bodies, they end up either as fat rolls on Molly or Cuba, or as very expensive waste on our lawns . . . Worse still, incorrectly balanced nutrients can be the cause of serious and irreversible health problems like kidney failure.

GRAIN-FREE, PAIN-FREE?

Grain-free diets for pets came about as a result of people associating their personal, very real concerns about dietary allergies, food intolerances and gastrointestinal conditions like Irritable Bowel Disorder, Colitis, etc. arising from gluten intolerance, with similar symptoms experienced by their pets. Veterinary research, however, has proven time and again that dogs and cats are not affected by grain-intolerance, as some humans are. If our pets are struggling with ingredient sensitivities (resulting in gastrointestinal symptoms, skin disorders, etc.) it's mainly the *proteins* that are the problem, not the grains in their diets.

The leading canine food allergen is, in fact,



chicken, with beef also highly represented. This is not as a result of these proteins being 'bad' for our pets but because of these proteins being the most commonly found protein sources in pet foods and therefore most pets are exposed to them during their lifetime. A small number of pets can develop an allergy to the proteins found in their regular diets and, in fact, dietary allergies generally only develop over a prolonged time of the pet being fed the protein in question. The same could happen with any protein source found in the majority of pet foods.

In cats, the most common food allergen is fish - NOT wheat, maize, barley, sorghum, rice or any other grain products. With that said, the percentage of pets that suffer exclusively from pure food allergies is remarkably low. The vast majority of allergy symptoms (itching, bloating, loose stools, ear infections, peri-anal fistulae, skin irritations, etc.) can be attributed to environmental (contact) allergies, or mixed ingredient-and-environmental allergies. Veterinarians can assist in distinguishing between these causes by making use of specially hydrolysed prescription diets that will not trigger an allergic reaction to dietary ingredients. If feeding this exclusion trial diet does not result in an end to the symptoms, the pet's diet is not the problem.

Much research has been done by veterinary nutrition experts

into the benefits of correctly cooked grains as a carbohydrate source for dogs and cats and this is backed up by the fact that thousands of generations of pets have lived long and remarkably healthy lives eating complete and balanced veterinary premium diets containing grains. Grains provide excellent sources of energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals for our pets, and are tolerated remarkably well by them. Different types and combinations of grains have successfully been used to stimulate appetite in elderly, ailing pets, to help regulate glucose levels in diabetics and to support weight-loss in obese patients.

While there is no doubt that a predominantly cereal-based diet is a no-no for pets (resulting in poor skin and coat condition, flatulence, high stool output, nutrient deficiency and obesity), a complete and balanced veterinary premium diet which contains appropriate levels of meat proteins and contains grains in the correct quantities, is perfectly safe for dogs and cats and, in fact, promotes excellent health.

ALARM BELLS!

If these previously mentioned points haven't quite convinced you to reconsider BEG feeding in favour of tried-and-tested, quality controlled veterinary premium products with longstanding (over 70 years, in some cases) track records for both health and safety of their products, the FDA recently released warnings regarding links between the increase of dilated

cardio-myopathy (DCM) cases in both dogs and cats, where the majority of the affected pets had been fed on BEG diets. Of increasing concern is the fact that breeds of dogs and cats not normally at risk for this heart condition are being diagnosed with it at increasing levels and that this group of pets was being fed BEG diets. While the exact link between grain-free, home-cooked, raw, boutique and exotic diets and the incidence of DCM in pets fed on these diets has not yet been established, the warnings are serious enough and (based on extensive feedback from veterinary cardiologists working together with veterinary nutrition experts) warrant us sitting up and taking notice. At this stage, it appears that products containing legumes, pulses, and certain types of potatoes as alternative carbohydrate sources are particularly worrisome.

The FDA strongly recommends sticking to well-known veterinary premium pet diets, that are certified complete and balanced and include grains, until the exact causes of increased heart failure of pets on BEG diets have been clearly established. Those pet parents who wish to continue feeding their chosen BEG product are cautioned by the FDA to let their vet know about their chosen diet for their pet so that particular attention can be paid to their pet's cardiovascular health at annual check-ups. The good news is that, if DCM is identified early enough and the appropriate treatment plan followed, this condition can





be reversed but an early diagnosis requires regular ultrasound assessment of the heart and its function by a veterinary cardiologist. Untreated, DCM is usually fatal within 6 months to a year.

DCM refers to a condition where the heart enlarges due to the heart muscle becoming thinner and weakened. As a result, the heart can no longer pump blood around the body effectively. Symptoms to look out for and discuss with your vet are:

- Loss of appetite
- Pale gums
- Increased heart rate
- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Distended abdomen
- Periods of weakness
- Fainting.

Twisted Whiskers has always recommended feeding the leading veterinary premium products, Hills, Eukanuba/lams and Royal Canin to dogs and cats, based on the extensive ground-breaking research that these international companies have contributed to pet health for over 70 years and their proven track

record of producing diets with measurable health benefits.

Vets Choice and Ultradog/Ultracat are veterinary quality, complete and balanced foods that, while containing more affordable ingredients, are still formulated according to the aforementioned nutritional principles.

Distinguishing between solid science and passing fads) when selecting a diet for our pets has never been more important than today where we are bombarded with a multitude of marketing messages aimed at the pet owner who wants to do the best for their pet.

We leave the last word to Dr. Lisa M. Freeman^{**}: *“Pet food marketing has outpaced the science, and owners are not always making healthy, science-based decisions even though they want to do the best for their pets. The recent cases of possible diet-associated DCM are obviously concerning and warrant vigilance within the veterinary and research communities. Importantly, although there appears to be an association between DCM and feeding BEG, vegetarian, vegan, or home-*

prepared diets in dogs, a cause-and-effect relationship has not been proven, and other factors may be equally or more important. Assessing diet history in all patients can help to identify diet-related cardiac diseases as early as possible and can help identify the cause and, potentially, the best treatment for diet-associated DCM in dogs.”

Your veterinarian will be able to assist with any further questions you may have regarding the best dietary option for your individual pets, but do yourself a favour and check out the following reputable veterinary websites which will give you factual information on the concerns about grain-free diets, as well as reliable advice on how best to meet your fur-baby’s nutritional needs and keep him bright-eyed and bushy-tailed for many years to come:
<https://vetnutrition.tufts.edu/faqs/about-general-pet-nutrition/>
<https://www.wsava.org/Guidelines/Global-Nutrition-Guidelines/>
<https://ourpetshealth.com/info/is-grain-free-dog-food-killing-our-pets>

REFERENCE:

^{**}Dr. Lisa M. Freeman DVM, PhD., DACVN (Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association December 1, 2018, Vol. 253, No. 11, Pages 1390-1394): <https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.253.11.1390>

For more information, please visit the Twisted Whiskers website: www.twistedwhiskers.co.za



THE CONE THAT'S A TRICK, NOT A TREAT

BY PETER STOFFBERG

“If it's a cone, leave it alone” is a frequently repeated and well memorised rhyme in parts of Australia. It's not, as you may suspect, a cruel adult ploy to hog all the ice creams – it's far more serious. The cone in question is a beautiful, highly sought-after shell which houses a large, slightly bizarre sea-snail. This isn't something that would ordinarily conjure up images of dread, but then, there's nothing ordinary about the Cone snail.

The Cone snail is a predatory mollusc with remarkable abilities. It has a wide mouth through which it can swallow prey as large as itself. It produces disposable, barbed harpoons that can be propelled through a proboscis at astounding speeds of nearly 250 000km/h. It also has the frightening ability to mix venom on the fly, concocting it specifically for the intended victim, and then injecting it by way of its harpoons. It can brew something quite special for self-defence. Among the hundreds of species of Cone snail, there are at least two that have been responsible for a number of human fatalities. There are plenty of other shells in the sea, as the rhyme says, it's wise to leave Cones alone.

Nothing about their shiny patterned shells betrays the deadly threat within. By the time you're in close contact, it can be too late. That's exactly what makes the constant repetition of the simple seven word rhyme all the more necessary. It may seem childish and mundane, but it's precious wisdom and it saves lives.

Globalisation, internationalism, and innovative technology have combined to offer us and our families unprecedented access to new and exciting experiences. The world is a small place and access to it is instantaneous. There's always something new to try - much is positive and useful but some is deceptive and destructive. It's not always easy to see the dangers, even when we've been warned, because the warnings can seem tedious or childish just like the cone rhyme.

Before we allow or encourage our children to partake in trendy



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celebrations and festivals, for example, we should ask a few questions. Does this celebrate life and love or does it glamorise fear, darkness and death? Where does the celebration originate, what is the meaning of the rituals, and are there spiritual connotations? Who is involved and are there warnings against its possible dangers?

We have access to the information to answer these questions. We should carefully consider the warnings. Sometimes the things that look the most attractive and seem the most harmless are those that we should be most cautious of. Scripture is the ultimate guide, and it's always best to start by asking if the activities we're considering meet with Jesus' approval.

Be safe.
God bless you and your family.

Peter



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Why leave your pets alone and away from home in an impersonal kennel? Rather leave them in their own loving home in my competent hands. Mature Lady with 20 years' experience will fill the gap that you leave. Please call Dee-Jean on 076 035 6908 / djb160453@yahoo.com. References upon request...NB (including Dainfern, FWG, Cedar Lakes).

AU PAIR.

My name is Bridget Phiri. I am 24 years old. I have my own vehicle and have 2 years' experience as a driver (kids' transportation, private chauffeur and Uber eats). I have also 2 years' experience as a volunteer high school teacher for English (literature) and History, and a year's experience as a private tutor. I am available to do au pairing in the Fourways area. Accommodation not required. For more information please contact me on 067 199 5477 or email: bridgetphiri@gmail.com.

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Fidelity Dainfern Contract Manager
084 342 5600

Willie du Plessis
Fidelity Dainfern Ops Manager
076 082 7750

Benjamin Botha
Fidelity Dainfern Area Manager
082 313 4986

WHAT'S IT LIKE IN HEAVEN?

BY JAMES CLARKE

I receive a lot of emails about heaven where, I suppose, we all want to go. But, like Vosloosburg, nobody is really sure where it is. And as I am away at present frolicking on the beach in my Speedo on the North Coast, I have some time to share some of the stories about heaven sent to me by readers over the years.

Long ago, says Des Adam in Bedfordview, a woman, Ethel, went to a séance and managed to contact her husband. She called out in a tremulous voice, "Hello Bert, is that you?"

"Yes dear."

"Are you happy, Bert?"

"Yes dear."

"Are you happier than when you were with me, Bert?"

"Yes dear."

"Oh. (Somewhat hurt) Well, heaven must be a nice place then, hey?"

"I'm not in heaven, Ethel."

Linda M Smith told me some time back about a couple – Myrtle and Joe - who had been married for over 50 years. Then Myrtle died. A couple of months later Joe died. As Joe went through the Pearly Gates he saw Myrtle running towards him. Joe shouted, "Hold your horses my dear! The deal was very clear: 'Until death do us part!'"

This prompted a friend to send me another story about heaven. He told me of a couple who made a deal that whoever died first would come back and inform the other if there was indeed life after death –

if reincarnation was true.

The husband was the first to die and, true to his word, made contact:

"Marion ... Marion?"

"Is that you, Bob?"

"Yes, I've come back like we agreed."

"That's wonderful! What's it like?"

"Well, I get up in the morning, I make love. I then have breakfast and then off to the golf course. I make love again, bask in the warm sun and then make love a couple of more times. Then I have lunch (you'd be proud – I eat lots of greens). Another romp around the golf course, then pretty much making love for the rest of the afternoon. After supper, it's back to the golf course. Then a bit more hanky panky before I catch some much needed sleep. Next day, back on the golf course..."

"Oh, Bob, so you're in Heaven?"

"No, I'm a rabbit on Dainfern Golf Course."

ARE THERE LAWYERS IN HEAVEN?

A teacher, a dustbin man and a lawyer reach heaven.

St Peter was in a bad mood for heaven was full. He said they must pass a test to get through the gates.

He asks the teacher, "What was the name of the ship that hit an iceberg and sunk?"

The teacher says, "The Titanic". St Peter lets him through.

He turns to the dustbin man, and thinking his smell might offend the angels, he asks a difficult one: "How many died on the Titanic?"

The dustbin man says: "1 228" and St Peter lets him in.

St Peter then turns to the Lawyer: "Name them."

"Not just now, ta."

Johannesburg city centre. A hot-gospeller is preaching above the sound of traffic: "Repent, ye sinners! Give up that vile stuff you are drinking. Come and be saved. All those who want to go to heaven stand over here."

"You sir! Why be the odd one out? Come and join us."

"Not intereshted!" says the tipsy hobo.

"You don't want to go to heaven?"

"Nope!"

"So *when* you die, you want to rot in hell?"

"Oh, when I die? Thatsh different. I thought you were making up a load right now."



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