



# Under the Baobab

Editor: Michel Zwaan

## From the banks of the Olifants

Bush greetings from Grietjie.

The autumn colours have begun to show, and the fresh early mornings are most welcome! We are going into the dry season with some of the best grass cover in years. Some late season rains have been most welcome.

**Temporary Gate:** Our attorney and I attended a meeting at the RAL offices in Polokwane. We presented our case for the relocation of our existing gate permit to the new location. It was a positive meeting and we are expecting the CEO to sign off on the move in the next 2 weeks. The de-registration will however still take some time as explained previously there is still no board to sit and hear our case to counter the objection received by P Ackerman. They are confident that the appointment of the board will commence shortly after the elections.

**Protected Area (PA):** The Balule legal team have consulted with all the affected parties and are in the process of compiling a letter of demand to LEDET to proceed with the declaration of all gazetted properties, including Grietjie. This will be lodged with the LEDET together with all the supporting documents. We believe that this issue will get the required attention from LEDET once the letter of demand has been lodged. There may be a delay if the MEC changes after the election, but an ANC victory would probably result in minimal changes to the make-up of LEDET.

We will keep you informed on the progress once the letter has been lodged.

**Game Drive Code of Conduct:** Unfortunately, the Easter weekend was riddled with situations where people were just ignoring the game drive code of conduct. At last year's AGM this document became part of the constitution and is binding on us all! The reason for this code of conduct is to treat both the animals and fellow owners with respect. This most certainly was not the case over that weekend.

The most common problem is the ignoring of the 2 vehicle per sighting rule. At one stage there were at least 10 vehicles crowding a lion sighting on River Road. My phone did not stop the entire weekend with people reporting constant contraventions. It most certainly ruined my weekend and I am sure it ruined it for many others too. It is unfortunate that common decency, respect for the animals and fellow owners disintegrates so quickly.

Another major issue is people allowing guests to drive themselves unaccompanied by an owner. These visitors have not signed the code of conduct and are unaware of the "local rules" regarding trespassing, one way's and the number of vehicles at a sighting. Please be aware that your rights as an owner do not automatically cede to guests staying at your place while you are not there. It is your responsibility to ensure that they are accompanied by someone that knows the Reserve to avoid them infringing on the rights of other owners. People conducting drives on the Reserve need to be mindful of others and obey the code of conduct rules. This will ensure a good experience for everyone. We had people standing on the back of a bakkie at a lion sighting, with one person getting off to go and urinate in the bush while still at the sighting! We had numerous people driving up Ndlovu the wrong way and a vehicle that decided to game drive on Olifants North!

The offenders were from private owners that allowed people to stay in their house, and 2 lodges that allowed paying guests to drive themselves around, in their rental sedans.

The Easter weekend was most definitely not a good advert for Grietjie and was one of the least enjoyable ones I have experienced since being here. I despise having to be a policeman, and so does the Warden. It is not fair to expect him to give up time with his family to police people conducting game drives. We will however make such arrangements for future long weekends as unfortunately it seems to be necessary.

**Tar roads:** Quality plant that is currently doing the roads outside the Reserve have failed to give us a quotation, after numerous follow ups. I have therefore got another company out to measure and give us a quotation. We will discuss this at the committee meeting and circulate a proposal to all members once complete. We have also tested a new scraper for the dirt roads that works well and if we are successful in acquiring it, should allow us to maintain the dirt roads even when there is no rain.

**Gate System:** We are still busy ironing out the bugs and customising the system as we receive feedback from owners. It is a phased approach and will get more advanced as we progress. It has however already been extremely useful for us and is starting to give us good information. Please provide the required information to Andrew Sutcliffe when requested.

Until next time,

From the banks of the Olifants.



## From the Vice chair

After dropping off the radar for a while, I am putting pen to paper again. Whilst doing this, I am sitting here with the sniffles and a household struck down with the flu. However, I am still sitting outside and enjoying the antics of the impala rams in rut. Wonderful!

Some of you might have noticed that I am no longer on any of the WhatsApp groups of Grietjie. The next thought, as I am sure you are thinking right now, is “why has Antoinette done this?” The reason is fairly simple: Social media started to dominate my life and I realised that there is much more to it here on Grietjie, than looking at my phone 18hrs a day. Believe it or not, this little exercise has been such a revelation and an eye opener. The first week it was really hard and I caught myself many times picking up my phone “just to check”. As time went by, my social media withdrawal symptoms became much easier. I started realising that I was beginning to use my sense so much more. I learnt how to LISTEN to the bush sounds, SMELL the scents (providing I don’t have a blocked nose☹) and to OBSERVE. When I now drive on Grietjie and on our own property, I take in so much more of my immediate surroundings. I am not listening out for the “coin drop” notification sound on my cell phone and I do not stop driving every 2 minutes “just to check”. I know now that when I find a ‘sighting’, whether it is a tree, bird, small creature or one of the Big 5, that I am the only one to thank for my gratifying experience and not my Smartphone. I also find that when I have ‘worked’ for my own sighting, the moment is so much more satisfying. You should try it, as it opens a whole real world around you and not a digital one!

Since the last newsletter there have been many holiday periods and the Reserve has been busy. There were some reports of angry retorts between Grietjies and with visitors. Please show some consideration to fellow Grietjies, but most importantly to the animals. You do not have to sit on top of a lion to see clearly! I kindly remind you that the “Game Drive Code of Conduct” is applicable to every person in this Reserve, whether Owner, CAPS or Visitors. As an owner it is your responsibly to educate any visitors of the Game Drive Code of Conduct. Ignorance should not be an excuse for bad behaviour.

As I meet owners during my travels on Grietjie, I sometimes get verbal complaints about various issues. I request that if you have a complaint, to please put it in writing and the committee can deal with the complaint you have raised. My open-door policy is still very much in place for valid Grietjie matters.

I would like to thank Jan Caspers for the selfless commitment in doing random speed checks on a regular basis. I always seem to get the same feed back from Jan. Owners, generally, are not the guilty parties for transgressing the speed limit. Let us keep it up and educate any contractor that may visit our properties.

As the days are getting shorter and nights are getting cooler, please look after yourselves and have your daily dose of Vitamin C.

Until next time.

Antoinette





## The Blissful Season of Autumn.

A few days ago, as I entered through the Grietjie gate, I was struck by a beautiful scene unfolding in front of me.

For miles and miles, the trees and shrubs are covered in beautiful, dazzling autumn colours. Our beloved bush is taking off its summer frock and putting on a winter jacket! Immediately the words of the poem, "To Autumn", by John Keats (1795 -1821) filled in my mind:

*'Seasons of mists and mellow fruitlessness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;'*

It is such a blissful time of the year. The beautiful colour of the leaves competes. One finds the most stunning colour references such as: Lemon, Mustard, Ruby Red, Cinnamon, Burnt Orange, Rusty Brown and Pickled Olive.

Autumn is the cushioning season between summer and winter, and it serves to enhance the perpetual cosmic cycles and rhythms of nature. It is also the season in which nature settles down. It lacks the aggressiveness and anger that the weather in the summer sometimes has. It is as if there is a complete surrender to calmness and tranquillity.

Autumn is also the season of hope. Hope in the sense that after the leaves have fallen, the seeds have spread and the trees have rested, there is an exciting promise of foreseeable flushing growth, new life and prosperity. In these times, "hope" is the most precious emotion that humans can cherish. Without hope, the human soul won't be able to sustain itself or survive.

I want to end with the words of Nicolas Sparks, award winning writer:

*'Hope is in the end, the most powerful tool that we have. And while it is always hovering around us, we must learn to embrace it!'*

Grietjies, please enjoy the last beautiful days of autumn.

Regards

Annelise du Plessis #69

P.S. Since the days are getting shorter and winter is sneaking up on us, I have decided to share this hassle-free soup recipe:

### Carrot and Orange Soup

25ml butter	750ml chicken stock
400g carrots diced	350ml orange juice
1 large onion chopped	5ml sugar
2 cloves garlic chopped	150 ml fresh cream
Salt and pepper to taste	

Sauté onion and garlic. Gradually add carrots and sauté for a few minutes.  
Add stock and gently boil until the veggies are tender.  
Using a hand-held blender, blend until smooth.  
Add sugar, salt, pepper and orange juice.  
Heat until it reaches boiling point.  
Remove from the heat, add cream and serve.  
Garnish with finely chopped coriander and a dollop of cream.





More home décor items for sale:

Giant mirror for entry hall. 1380 tall x 1100 wide in dark wood frame with geometric pattern, R200

Battery operated wall clock with temperature and humidity gauges, indoor, schoolhouse style, white, ticks loudly, R120

Pond plants, pickerel I think (blue flowered). Our waterhole plants need thinning although the elephants have helped lately. R50 for an armload, as much as you can carry. There is probably at least 6 armloads even if you can carry A LOT.

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