



# Under the Baobab

Editor: Michel Zwaan

## Chairman's report by Ian Nowak

### ON THE BANKS OF THE OLIFANTS:

Greetings from a very hot and dry Grietjie! It is saddening to see the condition of the bush for this time of year. After a promising start to the season, the landscape has transformed from lush, to sparse and dry. Unfortunately the low rainfall is not localised, it's similar in all areas of Balule. Some regions reported as little as 80mm for the entire summer thus far.

**Protected Area Application:** Our "included property list" and supporting documents were successfully submitted. At the time of submission, our % inclusion was just over 95%. Some frantic activity took place on the days approaching deadline day to achieve this! Thank you to everyone for making this submission a success.

The consultants handling the application have informed me that some additional documents may be required for the next phase. We will advise everyone shortly what these are.

I would also like to thank Hans Schmidt, Peter Meier, and Oom Theuns Trollip for their assistance in making this process a success.

**Road / Gate:** Deon Nieuwoudt, the chairman of this sub-committee has circulated a communication in this regard. I would to thank Mr JC Kriek (117), for the legal assistance he is providing us in this process.

**Balule:** The first phase of the fence on farm Paul has been completed. The next phase will begin immediately. With the high numbers of elephant breakouts onto the R40 in the past while it is imperative for their safety and ours this upgrade is completed speedily. Once complete and a new black Mamba picket (with 6 Mamba's) is placed there, both the animals' and our security will be greatly improved.

Thanks to both Gerrie and Johan for their continued efforts to improve our security on these areas.

I have been co-opted onto the security sub-committee for Balule. We are in the process of evaluating an affordable gate security system that can be deployed at all Balule Gates. This will assist greatly in the sharing of information and improving the security of the entire Balule. We aim to complete this process soon, so that implementation can roll out.

The KNP co-operation agreement meeting in Skukuza was both productive and informative. The structure to achieve representation on the JMB (Joint Management Board) was finalised. The re branding of the current "Greater Kruger" is still being debated, and will be finalised in the near future.

**Game Drives:** I appeal to all owners to please observe the "No Dogs allowed outside your vehicle" at the picnic spots.

### **Alien Species:**

**Attention ALL river front properties:** *Sesbania punicea* (red sesbania) is taking hold on the river bank. It is a class 1 weed and invasive species. It is required by law that these be removed from your property. The flowers, seeds and pods are toxic to both humans and animals. The pictures below should assist in identification.

When the current projects are complete, we will be able to assist owners with the removal of these (for a cost) if required. Please contact me directly if you are interested in using the removal service we will provide.



Thanks to Liz Lewis for bringing this to our attention.

Until next time,

From the banks of the Olifants.

## From the vice chair

From the Vice Chair

Never a dull moment in Grietjie! Some good and some bad. I would like to commiserate with fellow Grietjies whom suffered some loss/damage caused by the storm of 28 January. Personally we had some expensive damage and we are just now managing to clear the debris from the garden. We have done some emergency repairs, but the building re-construction will have to wait for a later date. Between the drought, elephants and the wind on Grietjie, our last remaining big trees have really taken a beating. After all said and done, one big lesson I think that everybody should learn as we go along is.....Make sure all roofs are secured with Hurricane clips!

At the moment I am a bit like a mother with a heart that is overflowing with proudness. Thank you Grietjie! Well done to everybody for getting your supporting documents for the Protected Area Application to us on time. Sometimes it was tough going, but we all did it. Now the waiting game begins... I would like to extend a HUGE thank you to Oom Teuns Trollip, Peter Meier and Hans Schmid for the tremendous effort, sacrifice of their personal time and willingness to help with contacting some owners. Us Newbies certainly have learned a lot from the "Wise Owls"

I would like to give a smiley thank you for the treats we have received as token of appreciation for the work we have done. Thanks to Casart Game Lodge, Natie van Staden and Rene Hefti. We did enjoy them very much!

In March we anticipate to start with our community projects. I have already been offered enthusiastic help from fellow Grietjies before we have even identified the projects. That's the spirit! I will be in contact via the newsletter, WhatsApp groups and personally to organise these upcoming initiatives. I hope to see all of you there at the time and helping where you can, financially or physically. Please include some gloves on your shopping lists next time you visit the hardware store. You will need them!

The Grietjie Newsletter is for the Grietjie Community by the Grietjie Community. Please put pen to paper and send in your contributions.

The "Capture the Moment" photo competition is running well and we have received some really good photos of the photographer's moments. Please keep sending your photos. Get out there, take your phone, take your camera and start capturing some moments!

My door is always open and my phone will be answered (another story with reception). Please keep in touch with me, even just for a chat. I always welcome suggestions and positive criticism.

As autumn will be approaching and good rainfall has not arrived yet, let us keep praying and be hopeful for some more rain to fall.

Until next time.

Antoinette

## New Years party

What a great to start 2018!

A very big THANK YOU to Hans and Sharon Schmidt who hosted a fabulous fun filled New Year's eve party in the beautiful setting of their lovely home!

The celebrations went on way beyond Grietjie 'midnight' and for most of us it was the first time in many years that we actually made the real midnight helped with copious amounts of champagne! We are indebted to Hans and Sharon who have been instrumental in bringing our little community together with the first Friday of the month rendezvous at the picnic site and we hope that this year more of you will bring your drinks and snacks and join us as we continue to expand our Grietjie 'family'. Let's make 2018 a fun year! We wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New year!

Trevor and Robert #104



## The Warden's Indaba by Gerrie van Zyl

### 1) SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL/FENCE:

Doreen & Morelag fence repairs daily - Elephants

Guests from Olifants south exit Grietjie without any entrance permit - creates a security problem

Guest from Parsons Travel through olifants north and exit at Grietjie gate without permission - did not notify Cornell.

Burglary at 112 on the 28 Jan 18. SAP and Forensics were there and follow leads. Thank you to Johan for all his efforts and time.

Phase 1 -New fence on Paul between railway line and Foskor are finish

Phase 2 -Will start next week, concrete slabs for Mamba Pickets and 4.1 Km fence from the railway line to the R40.

### 2) GAME MANAGEMENT:

All animals in fair condition except a few Impala and Buffalo show ribs

Grietjie flooded with male Lions.

a Few Wildebees calf's and Zebra fowls was born in Jan.

No Buffalo calf's on Grietjie but surprisingly saw a few on Paul, obviously to many Lions on Grietjie

Elephant's very active on Paul - Lots of fence and water tank damage.

Elephants on the R40 every night and I want to thank Johan Grobler, Jan Caspers, Joe Pearson(Olifants North) Christo ( Maseke ),Thinus (farm Paul) and Phillip ( Rob 5 ) for spending hours at night to chase Elephants back into Paul

Worker from the farm Paul were chased from his house to the R40 three times.

Flew over Foskor to establish how many Buffalo and Elephant were there +- 30 Buffalo and the same on Elephants counted, once the new fences on Paul is in place we will chase them into Doreen. The previous week Foskor and Nature Conservation chased 100+ buffalo from Foskor into Doreen,

My Rangers and I walked the northern portion of Paul to establish if there were Elephants and Buffalo in that block, we found fresh signs - Craig organized a chopper on Friday 26 Jan to chase them back into Paul.



### 3) VEGETATION:

Red Bushwillow and Mopani turning yellow.

Hardly any grass left

Elephants Target Marula trees at this moment. Had to remove from roads.

### 4) CLIMATE AND RAINFAL

35 mm rain for Jan 18 at the gate (including the freak storm) 117 mm for the season.

Hot and very dry

### 5) ROADS:

Repair potholes on our tar road.

Grade Darisandi rd. Euphorbia rd. and tractor broke while busy grading Berg rd.,

### 6) GENERAL:

Very busy time for me at the moment, erecting fences, repairing tractor, chasing elephants. repairing and cleaning roads,

Once again, I want to thank everybody for supplying labor, without their help we will never succeed.

A great thank you to Marius du Plessis for lending me his compressor and operator to drill all the holes 200+ holes in an old road for the Paul fence.

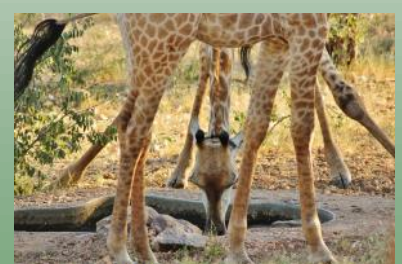
## "Capture of the moment" competition

1 Forked tail

2 Grietjie beauty contest finalist

3 Baboon makes campfire

4 Legs, legs, legs!



## Wayne's World





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**Anything Fresher is still being Baked**

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Facebook: Bakers Basket

## Gamedrive Guidelines

When we first arrived at Grietjie, we were given a lovely "welcome pack". Therein was a set of Game Drive Guidelines. These guidelines are also available on our web page: [www.grietjiepnr.co.za](http://www.grietjiepnr.co.za)

Many of you may know Marius Swart, resident at #85. Marius is a well-known Safari Guide (Clearly Africa) and also conducts some of the walking safaris in the Kruger National Park. He likes to increase awareness of nature, wildlife and human interface by drawing from his practical experience and intuitive abilities. He believes in mindful attention to our natural surroundings and hence nourishing our souls. We can sometimes take nature for granted. By considering the obvious in a slightly different way, we can have a truly amazing bush experience and be respectful to animal and human alike.

I have had some discussions with Marius about the game drive guidelines at Grietjie. I believe that in previous issues of the Newsletter, the game drive guidelines were published. However, it is a good idea to refresh our memories and to create some awareness about our human actions.

Every month we will publish a few of the game drive guidelines with the conventional reasons behind them. Thank you, Marius, for your input.

Antoinette

GAME DRIVE GUIDELINES Explanation by Marius Swart

Guides / Drivers should never be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Although wildlife is not OUT TO GET US, sober judgement is of importance. Having a beer/drink while on drive is acceptable, but please be judicious in consumption so as to avoid safety as well as social compromises. We are striving to elevate Grietjie' reputation.

**A maximum speed limit of 40km/h is to be adhered to at all times. For optimum game viewing a driving speed of between 10 and 15kph is recommended.**

The "game drive route" might be an oval, but it is not a race-track. Everyone THINKS they have the reflexes of a ninja and would avoid a collision with an animal...and collisions are rare. The point, however, is not necessarily avoiding an accident, it is about showcasing a level of respect towards the place where we live. The wildlife, sense-of-place, as well as people who live here, deserve a certain regard. By keeping your speed within limits, we can all feel just that little bit better about ourselves and those we share the reserve with.

Do not trespass on properties if you have no permission from the owner to be on their land.

Very few people would point-blank refuse you access if there is a good sighting to be shared. Be civil and ask.

**NO OFF ROAD DRIVING AT ALL.**

Wheels compact soil and increase erosion, tyres crush grasses and small creatures. Position yourself on the road, use binoculars and zoom lenses

No littering in the bush. All cigarette butts and toilet paper to be taken back to camp in appropriate containers.

Having a ziplock bag for used tissues or cigarette butts makes for an easy solution.

Guests to remain fully clothed at all times. Shirts may not be removed.

Again referring to upholding and enhancing our reputation as a reserve



A Landy Legend turns 70

20 January marked the 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday of our Beloved Landy Legend, AKA Oom Blackie to most of us.

Celebrations started at 10am with the traditional KOEK EN TEE. Some tasty treats were served plenty of laughter was the order of proceedings. Later that afternoon in true Berg road style, the residents of Berg road got together to wish Blackie a blessed birthday.

As the sunset, close friends and family gathered to celebrate his birthday in true Grietjie style. Linda lit 70 candles to symbolise 70 years of this legend's life. Linda together with help of a few local ladies made the most delicious dinner. Celebrations went on until the early hours of the morning. Blackie and friends proved that 70 is only a number. Blackie and Linda plan to still spend many years on their beloved #81. Blackie it's time you start writing that book about life on Grietjie.

Blackie May you be blessed with abundance and good health. You are a legend. You are always smiling and have very friendly manner. At one stage or another all residents of Grietjie have turned to Blackie for help or advice. He has never turned anyone away.

Long live this great and generous man. Blackie de Swardt.

