



# Under the Baobab

Editor: Michel Zwaan

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## Chairman's report by Ian Nowak

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Ian Nowak

#### ON THE BANKS OF THE OLIFANTS:

Greetings from a lush and green Grietjie! The good rainfall has continued this month, things are looking better for the upcoming winter. The rain has been good, but not for the roads. Repairs will continue.

**Protected Area Application:** We are expecting the "intention to declare" as a protected area will be Gazetted in the new few weeks. Once this happens it will be easier to predict a time line for the remainder of the process. It is a good sign that things are progressing well.

**General Meeting:** A reminder of the general meeting to be held on Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of April. It will be held at portion 0,2 Mr Dex Kotze (previously the VEK church property). The memorandum regarding the inclusion of the farms Doreen & Paul into Balule has been circulated. A discussion regarding the entrance road and gate will follow.

**Balule:** The entire Balule has been receiving this wonderful late rain. Although many regions have not seen the same recovery as Grietjie, it is still a welcome improvement.

The electrification along the R40 fence has been a great success. No recent breakouts have occurred.

**Community Projects:** The vice Chair covers this topic in her report. I would just like to add my thanks to those that came out and helped, and to those that offered a contribution as they couldn't be there. It was really wonderful to see, the results and general "feel good" factor were great.

Thanks to Jaco and Antoinette for driving this. I really look forward to the next one! Over time these efforts will make a big difference to our reserve.

In closing I would like on behalf of the committee and staff of Grietjie, to send our deepest sympathy and condolences to the van Staden family for the tragic loss of their son Gerhard. Our thoughts are with you during this difficult time.

Until next time,

From the banks of the Olifants.

## Capture of the moment competition

Photo 1: Strictly come dancing Grietjie style-

Photo 8: Impala kill

Photo 14: Grietjie Moonrise



## From the vice chair

It dawned on me during the Easter weekend how quickly time flies. The first quarter of the year has come and gone.

I warmly welcome the following new owners to the Grietjie Community:

0&2 - Dex Kotze  
 11 - Dino Seccareccia  
 24 - Johan Slabbert  
 125 - Gerry Cambanos

During March we started our community projects.

Jaco from Mhangela is the leader and he has been very enthusiastic and excited about our work.

Thank you Jaco, for your dedication and a job well done.

I am sure that by this time, most of you have seen the benches and handrails at picnic spot 1 and 2. Hopefully the "Greybeards" will find it a bit easier to access the area. I would like to thank the staff of properties 54, 79, 83, 80 for lending a hand. We also started a community project on property 89. Although at this stage we have not completed the project, we will carry on in April towards our goal. The following properties sent labour and also assisted as owners: 12, 38, 39, 40, 45, 47, 54, 74, 80, 109, 115, and 125. Thank you very much for all the hard work. I will again call on the Grietjie community to complete this project. Provisional dates for the next phase are 24 and 25 April, but I will communicate this closer to the date. This time around we will need a few painters please!

I have received some cash donations for the community projects from Paula and Larry #16 and Stoffel and Charmaine #35 Thank you for your generosity. Besides needing hands to do the work, these financial resources are also crucial.

I would like to extend our sincere condolences on behalf of the Grietjie Community, to Natie and Charmaine van Staden #73, on the passing away of their son Gerhard. You are in our thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time.

For now keep well

Antoinette

## The Warden's Indaba by Gerrie van Zyl

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

#### Doreen & Morelag fence repairs

- Old Paul fence electrified. Elephants test the fence on a daily basis , glad to say it keeps the Elephants of the R40
- New Paul Fence in progress.

### 2) GAME MANAGEMENT:

- All animals in condition.
- The good rains keep the Elephant's occupied on Paul
- Brown Hyena were captured on trail camera on 95.
- Good Lion sightings during the holidays.

### 3) VEGETATION:

- Bush green and lush.
- No grass along the river. Good grass cover further up towards our border.

### 4) CLIMATE AND RAINFALL

- 18mm rain at the gate for March 18. 298 mm for the season at the gate.
- Hot and very humid.

### 5) ROADS:

- Grade all the roads after the last rains.
- Remove sand and rocks from tar roads.

### 6) GENERAL.

I appeal to owners of game viewers with spotter seats on the front to be very cautious, if you want to use the spotter seat make sure the spotter is an experience guide, I came across a game viewer the other day with a young child in the spotter seat. Not only is it dangerous, if you know Lion behavior you will not do that (Do yourself a favor and go to a lion sanctuary, you will notice that the Lions only have eyes for children because they are easy prey) Not to mention what will happen if you come around a corner and come across an Elephant bull in must and even worse an irritated breeding herd of Elephants. For the record I have been charged more by cows than by Bulls. (Ask Hendrik and Nelson)





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## Gamedrive Guidelines

### GAME DRIVE GUIDELINES Explanation by Marius Swart

Take note of the time spent at a sighting showing consideration to your fellow viewers who also wish to visit the sighting. Use your discretion. However as a guideline if other vehicles are on standby for the same sighting a 15 minute viewing period per vehicle should be sufficient.

**Especially if animals are stationary, like lions, it is always possible to return later in the day when the chances of them becoming more active increases. Have a good view and allow them some sanctuary too. Remember that you will be the one "on standby" at some point.**

Always enter a sighting at low revs. This will lower the engine noise. Once in the sighting switch off your engine.

**Idling in gear is usually sufficient to crawl forward into position. Switching off as soon as you are settled will allow for a calm and relaxed encounter and also provide an opportunity to listen to the animals. Remember that any fast or loud activity can potentially ruin the sighting. Attempt to have only one engine running in a sighting. The same goes for departures, indicate to the remaining vehicle that you intend to leave before starting up. Engage 1<sup>st</sup> gear and idle-crawl out till you are about 20m away before starting to accelerate. Be aware to keep voices down until well away from the sighting.**

Do not block the path or direction of an animal's movement. No chasing of nervous animals is permitted.

**Allowing animals to go about their business unhindered, affords us the opportunity to witness unaltered, peaceful behaviour and thus prolonged encounters. Every encounter will shape the expectation of the animal about the next encounter. If we maintain a respectful approach then that will be returned going forward.**

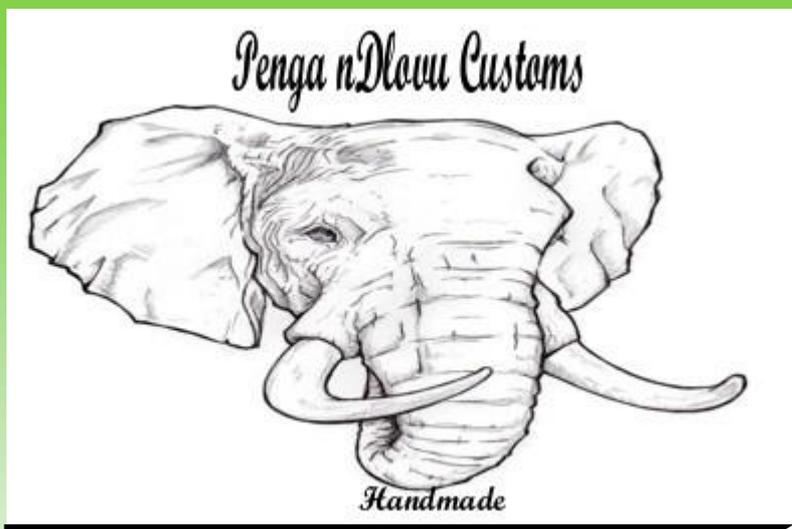
Assess the situation when arriving at a sighting. i.e. Escape routes (for the animals and yourselves), off road terrain, animals behaviour, etc. Where possible pull to the side of the road in a sighting so that other vehicles can pass you without you needing to start up and move to make space.

**Park on the side of the road where the animal is as to allow others to pass without coming between you and the sighting.**

Never drive between another vehicle and the sighting blocking off the view of that vehicle. Obtain permission if you need to move.

**Be considerate. Basic courtesy.**





- **For all your handmade knives.**
- **For all your sharpening of your kitchen knives**

**Come to plot 77 or dial  
071- 9033270**

Clever ways tips by Jens and Jaco

#### Tips for an environmentally friendly farm & bush life

One of the challenging tasks for all Grietjie residents is how to manage domestic waste in this (soon) protected conservation area. How do we reduce (or even avoid) "black bags" being dropped at Phalaborwa landfill? How would I use less/ no plastics or packaging materials in my bush house? Where do we find harmless and environmentally friendly products to clean and maintain our properties in this priceless piece of earth?

This column shall give tips to live environmentally friendly and to become the true trustees of nature and bush that we all aim to be. Everybody is invited to share their tips and advice for the sustainability of our beautiful part of the Greater Kruger National Park - Grietjie! by in future email your tips to [jd@mhangela.farm](mailto:jd@mhangela.farm) or [jr@mhangela.farm](mailto:jr@mhangela.farm)

Many of these tips you will know about, maybe see these then just as a reminder! We are looking forward to hear about your individual experiences.

Following is our first motion towards pollution freedom.

#### Clever ways,

Waiting in the cue at the supermarket till, after what seems to be for ages, I observed the old man in front of me timeously unpacking every item in his basket with precision and care. Dreamingly a dark something screamed at me... he purchased, I assume as one would for a single individual, one item of each possible fruit and vegetable variant found in the fresh section. The noise I heard was that each of these organic items were stuffed within its own individual 200 x 400 mm plastic bag weighed and priced... the horror

Here at Mhangela, we are hard at aim in reducing as much as possible of our plastic use. We are well on the way in avoiding micro plastics found in any commercial hair & body product through to not consuming any plastic bags offered at the of normal retailers. We try to make clever choices in this regard and always mean to have nature in mind... We have all this truly to blame on Grietjie! Since we bought here, a clear message conspired in our behaviour: our obligation to preserve this piece of wonder and therefore the need to avoid pollution, much more with a meaning than before superficially with no purpose. Since then we slowly added one task of green objective at a time and living each month more focused and sustainable with a new task added once we mastered the previous.

Jens and I have been mauling recently about how to reduce the cling wrap as food preservation usage in our fridge. Of course we reused the wrap several times before disposing thereof, but this deemed a second class alternative for us... so into the books and research we went... We found a perfect idea...one that is practical, usable and environmentally friendly. A bee's wax cotton cloth...

Bees wax in a nut shell is natural, antibacterial, antifungal, edible, waterproof, moisturizing, eco friendly and never goes bad. Cotton is reusable, naturally grows and is far more reliable than plastic alternatives with best of all, bio degradable. What a marriage of product!

Beeswax wraps becomes malleable with your natural touch (warmth) and seals immediately after you sculpted this around your container. Reuse this by simple rinsing with water and store in your towel cupboard.  
**You can make this yourself with this recipe... a perfect family engagement activity!**

**You will need:**

100% (organic) cotton fabric squares (cut a few different sizes)

About a cup of grated beeswax

An iron

An old or new towel or blanket that you don't mind getting waxy

A few sheets of grease proof paper

**Method:**

Step 1: Lay down your towel and turn on the iron to heat it up.

Step 2: Place a few sheets of greaseproof paper onto the towel then lay one of your cotton squares on top of this.

Step 3: Evenly sprinkle your beeswax over the cotton square, ensuring that you go to the edges.

Step 4: Place a few more sheets of greaseproof paper back on top of the wax and cotton square and then iron over it.

Step 5: Peel back the paper to check that the wax is evenly melted. You may need to sprinkle more on for even coverage and then replace the paper and iron again.

Step 6: Peel the wax infused cotton square of the greaseproof paper and let it cool and set on a wire rack or peg it onto a line of string to dry.

Step 7: Use as you would cling-wrap! We recommend that you don't use it on dairy or meat products as they may leave harmful bacteria on the wrap

OR you can order online ... less interesting but possible.

Here at Mhangela... we are for sure off our previous addiction in using cling wrap, waxed paper or plastic containers!

Join us in this venture... you will have nature enjoying this most!

Best of luck from Mhangela! Please read our tip next month, you are very welcome to share your tips !!!

Just recently Trish Liggett shared her very environmentally friendly way of fogging the lower glass panes of your glass doors with a flour and water mix to prevent the Hornbills from braking the glass causing the baboons to raid.

