Saying goodbye to Summer and hallo to Winter!

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The adage “a new broom sweeps clean” - never more true!

Have you seen how neat and clean the area north of the Wilderness Hotel is now? Gone are the unsightly piles of builders rubble and soil that the WRRA’s Chair and John Miller have long tried to get removed! They pressured our accommodating Counsellor, Marlene Barnardt, to pressure the various Municipal Directors to address the problem. No doubt a stream of directives were issued to effect the clean-up and someone somewhere in York Street is looking for someone to delegate this task to as read this.

Along comes our ‘new broom’ handling the Services portfolio, Shiralee Moore (RE/MAX). She simply calls Yolandi, an efficient young lady at the Municipality who in turn calls Johnny Jonck who just happens to be working in Wilderness with a 10 ton truck, a TLB and a smile! Job done!

Thanks Shiralee, Yoland and Johnny!

Just look around on a Tuesday morning and its obvious **not everyone is recycling!**

WRRA is asking that every Wilderness home recycles in order to help reduce landfill problems and poisoning our world!

**WHAT MUST BE RECYCLED?**

- **HARD PLASTICS**
  - (not thin plastics or polystyrene)
- **GLASS**
- **CANS/ METAL**
- **PAPER/ CARDBOARD**

**EVERYTHING MUST BE CLEAN AND DRY.**

NO nappies, light bulbs, batteries or food waste!

BAG not full? Put it out next week when it is!
Thank you to the 68 folks who paid their WRRA membership fees last month!

If your’s is still outstanding, its just R170 for 2018.
Please pay WRRA, NEDBANK Garden Route Mall, Branch code 153614, Acc No 1110522444.

NB. Use your NAME and ERF NUMBER as reference.
Email proof of payment to wrra@tiscali.co.za

A Growing Sense of Community!

Our Wilderness Vision...

Wilderness is a secure and caring community, passionate about the exceptional natural beauty that surrounds us and the gentle village lifestyle we embrace.

TO CONTACT WRRA simply email Jackie at wrra@tiscali.co.za and she will forward your query to the relevant portfolio holder. If you have to phone, please avoid weekends and ‘after hour’ calls, we are all volunteers!

POWER-LINE THREAT REDUCED - BUT....
Langvlei Dunes is grateful to the Municipality for clearing the trees threatening the powerlines—but the felled trees and branches have been left behind which creates yet another fire risk.
Andre Hacquebord, the very active chair of the Langvlei Dunes Association, is looking at building a chipper that Association members can use in order to tackle fire fuel loads on their properties.

RONDEVLEI TO N2 ROAD UPDATE.
Having lost the budget to hard-surface the road between the N2 and the Rondevlei T-junction, the residents mounted a petition to the Western Cape government. That seemingly failed. But surprisingly it was picked up by the George Municipality and R36 million has been set aside in the 2021 budget!

FIRE ESCAPE ROUTES ARE NOT RECREATIONAL TRAILS! SanParks will be gating the emergency exits from Langvlei Dunes across park land due to the unauthorised use by bikes and vehicles.

Finally The Fourth Ape!

He is the sum of the first three:
He sees nobody, hears nobody and speaks to nobody!
Let’s dump on dumpers!

We got this email from Ashleigh of the Paradise Ridge Conservancy: “As an area of natural vegetation and visual importance whilst approaching Wilderness, properties on the South Side of the N2 and on the east of Die Duin area are encouraged to prevent the further dumping of garden waste that often include yuks and other spikey and very difficult plants to get rid of.”

We couldn’t agree more! Some property owners are simply not aware that their gardeners are dumping garden waste illegally… but we ask them to address the matter urgently.

Anyone seeing illegal dumping should please report it to the Municipality (Herman 083 644 1292).

Dredging of the Serpentine

Terry Smith sent an email regarding the dredging undertaken in the Serpentine River... his email (shortened) read:

“Many of us will have noticed the rather large grey banked trenches that have been dug along the Serpentine River and wondered, what was going on? Coffer dams were dug in old farm land into which dredged mud and silt was pumped. Large pipes and pumps were used to do the dredging. Water drained out of the dams, leaving sand and debris behind.

By all accounts this has been a success. E.coli level have dropped and early studies on fish life indicate that the natural cycle of breeding and returning to sea is back in order. Well done to SANParks!”

Jonathan Britton of SANParks added to the information (also shortened): “The main motivation for the dredging was to remove constrictions in the channels from sediment that was deposited from road drainage. (See photo showing the road gravel.) These constrictions impacted the water flow between the Touw River, Island Lake, Langvlei and Rondevlei and from our fish monitoring programme we suspect this had an impact on fish movement through the system as well as water chemistry. Long term data suggest that the salinity of the Touw River Lakes System has decreased over the last few years. Our monitoring systems will indicate if there is a positive change as a result of this dredging project. Levels of E.coli in Island Lake should not be a concern; the results for April were very low, as were those for Nitrogen and Phosphates that one would expect to find if there was a sewage leak or other forms of pollution. E.coli will be found in all natural water bodies and fluctuate as birds and other animals move through an area and do what animals do. A flock of egrets could have moved through the sample area a couple of hours before the samples were taken resulting in higher levels! Like Mr Smith, we are also very optimistic that we will see positive changes as a result of the dredging. Please thank him for the positive message he shared, we certainly do appreciate positive and constructive feedback.”
Join the Wilderness WAR on WEEDS!

Weeds are plants that grow where they shouldn’t be! Most are ‘illegal aliens’ imported from foreign countries before we knew better!

Angie Hill of Constantia Kloof Conservancy, has shared a very interesting and informative link to an article – ‘Invasive alien plants in South Africa pose huge risks, but they can be stopped.’ It reminds us that alien plants are ‘Green Water Guzzlers’.


Potential Greening Project in Wilderness area

The Touw River Conservancy, Rotary, The Greenpop organisation and other interested stakeholders are investigating a potential "greening" project in our area. The project will tie in with Greenpop’s long term strategy of replanting indigenous trees in previously fire ravaged areas. Watch this space! An Eco project is being born!

4. Lantana

Verbenace

Another South American invasive, Lantana is a huge problem in SA, and is a NEMBA Category 1b plant which means it must be removed and destroyed! They are easy to spot being an untidy spreading shrub growing up to 2m or higher with four-angled stems, often with thorns. Leaves: Oval, dark green, rough, hairy leaves which are paler below. Flowers: Small, clustered, pink, red, crimson, orange, yellow or white flowers appearing from September to April. Fruit/seeds: Poisonous glossy green fruits which turn purplish-black. And they spread through their seeds.

Why is Lantana a problem?

Lantana competes with and replaces indigenous species, reducing biodiversity of natural ecosystems. Poisonous to humans and animals, it is responsible for livestock mortalities. It is even a threat to pets, small mammals and wildlife! Please remove any you see!
**WILDERNESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

**Isn't our Wilderness village looking great?**
Cornell has been busy with our new WRRA gardener (Christo), the remaining EPWP cleaner (Aubrey) and the garden service (Ari Grass Cutters) that your membership fees and business signs along the N2 help pay for!

Milkwood Village are keen to beautify the area between them and Sanctuary Lane! **Fantastic!**

**ROADS**  
Doug Wilcox

At the last WRRA meeting the matter of the large Heights/Map of Africa sign that has lain ‘flat on its face’ (since being taken out by a truck working on the Heights Road upgrade) was raised AGAIN. To our amazement and probably thanks to our Councillor, Marlene, who attends the meetings when she can, the very next day the sign was up again! Well done, Municipality!

We are hoping the white line missing from the centre of Waterside Road might also magically appear one of these days!

No news on when the N2 works might be starting. There are rumours of budget problems.

**SERVICES**  
Shiralee Moore

For some 3 years there has been a leak from a pipe along the old railway track bridge over the Kaaimans River. (see pic right). Shiralee took it up with Municipality and spoke to the Deputy Director Engineering Services, Mr Henri Jansen. It appears that a risk assessment has been done but as the project is too dangerous for the Municipality to handle it has been put in the hands of specialist contractors.

Erratic refuse collection times have been the result of the Municipality having numerous truck break-downs. The good news is that two new trucks have been acquired (drivers being trained right now) with two more on order! In the mean time our thanks go out to the collection teams who have often worked late into the night to get the job done!

**DEVELOPMENT DILIGENCE**  
John Miller

A lively discussion over the parking crisis in Wilderness concluded with the realisation that WRRA is frustratingly not able to do more than put pressure on the Municipality to focus on the problem. The WRRA does not own land, the common or the current parking area next to Milkwood Village. It does lease that parking area at present - but what is going to happen when that erf is developed?

Chris Leggatt had previously proposed that the lower portion of our Common be made level, (better for sports training and events), with a small amphitheatre incorporated above that for music recitals, Christmas carols etc.

**Great poster spotted in England:**

**Want to start YOGA?**

Start by bending over and picking up your dog poo... known as the ‘downward dog position’

THEN PUT IT IN A BIN

**Just for fun, what do you think? Please drop your vote to “YES” or “NO” to wrra@tiscali.co.za before the end of May.**
DON’T MISS...

Sat 19 May  8.00am
Hoekvil Trail Run & Country Bazaar
Race: pre-entries www.aswd.co.za
21.1km: 8:00 - 10km: 8:10
Fun run: 8:15

Wed 23 May  6.00 for 6.30pm
Wilderness Hotel

R10 WRRA Members
R20 non-members

BEYOND ENDURANCE!

Don’t miss this talk by Antarctic doctor and bold adventurer, Joan Louwrens.
Now based in Knysna, Joan will deal with Ernest Shackleton’s desperate journey to South Georgia and how he, Worsley and Crean became the first men to tackle the massive mountains in order to save their lives and the lives of their stranded crew.

Sat 26 May  8:30—13:30
Fairy Knowe Hotel.
“Conversations in Conservation” 2018

Come and participate in the 2018 'Conversation in Conservation' event. It will feature a fascinating collection of speakers, activists, environmentalists and provides a space for members of the public to gather and learn about conservation topics from within our beautiful Garden Route. From Fire Ecology to Crowned Eagles, from collaborative mapping to up-cycled artwork, we will have space to engage with like-minded people on a diversity of conservation topics.

Entry is free, with donations welcome. Refreshments and lunch will be available from the Hotel - So bring a friend, and come get involved in the conversation.

To RSVP, send an email to Caroline at carolinedianehall@gmail.com
April Police Forum feedback...

Crime Statistics for the previous year are showing a slight increase in most aspects. House robberies were only up by one ... but as W/O Bennie Boshoff said, “one is still one too many!”

A further concern is the number of rapes and assaults associated with drunkenness in Touwsranten and our informal settlements. Warnings to vulnerable women seem to fall on deaf ears so the Police are focusing on seizing illegal liquor and drugs and closing down illegal shebeens.

A second concern is the three Hoekwil burglaries (Dec to now) that targeted persons over 70. Bennie appeals to everyone with elderly neighbours to please be attentive to them and even volunteer to look over their homes to ensure they are secure. Our always caring W/O Boshoff is also prepared to do such home security checks... just call him on 084 300 1151.

After a slow first three months, “all hell broke loose!” reported Boshoff.

Four burglaries in Sands Road all in one night, four in three days in the Heights, a firearm stolen and two incidents of tents being cut open with a knife and items stolen.

Four youngsters were robbed while walking on the Vic Bay railway line and four cars broken into.

Thanks to excellent CCTV equipment at one of the Sands Road break-ins, Bennie identified a perpetrator as a George criminal—and he made the mistake of coming back to Wilderness and was apprehended!

Boshoff thinks that CCTV is becoming a vital tool in ensuring criminals are put behind bars. If you can afford it... fit it!

He also cautioned that criminals don’t stay behind bars! The man who is a serial burglar in the Heights is due to be released from jail on the 18th of May. Be aware!

A Heights resident described his drawn out experience with the Court system. But he cleverly got hold of a helpful clerk who agreed to call him when he needed to appear instead of him wasting the whole day waiting to testify. However the end is in sight and he, like W/O Boshoff urged people to not only report crime, but to lay a charge and go through the steps required to ensure a conviction.

THAT WAY A MESSAGE GOES OUT THAT WILDERNESS DOES NOT TOLERATE CRIME—PEOPLE HERE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT PUTTING CRIMINALS BEHIND BARS!
BE FIREWISE
UNDERSTANDING
OUR FIRE RISK

As we all know, we live in a high fire risk region and due to climate change that risk is rising rapidly!

In winter coastal areas like ours the Fire Danger Index rockets into the red when berg winds start pumping and, frighteningly, weather experts are forecasting more climate extremes which means more droughts and more berg wind events!

In the event of a fire driven by berg wind conditions, no home in Wilderness is safe. Surrounded by fynbos, forests and reeds, fire sparks can fly for hundreds of metres - and ignite dead leaves and twigs in my garden or yours! And the next thing there are two fires to fight... then three... then four... and we have a repeat of the Knysna fire disaster!

That’s why your local FMU (Fire Management Unit) is placing such emphasis on reducing fire fuel loads on every property... and creating fire breaks that will not stop the fire’s progress but will enable firefighters to reach the flames.

PLEASE BE WISE & NOT SORRY!

FMU MOVEMENT GROWING!

“Planning to PREVENT wild fires is FAR BETTER than trying to FIGHT them!”

More and more property owners in the greater Wilderness area are taking this wisdom on board.

The champions of the Wilderness area FMUs (Fire Management Units) meet monthly to integrate plans and learn from each other’s experiences.

What exactly are the FMU’s doing?

1. RISK ASSESSMENTS: Street Monitors are identifying properties along our roads that present the biggest fire risks in respect to aliens and fire-fuel. The laws are clear: property owners are legally responsible for removal of alien plants and control of fire loads on our properties.

2. SMOKE REPORTS: The FMUs are putting in place processes to follow in the event of smoke or fire being spotted. These actions will be reported and monitored through WhatsApp groups run by each FMU, which in themselves are inter-linked and also link to the SCFPA. (Southern Cape Fire Prevention Association)

3. FIRE MARSHALLS: These folk will be the first on the scene after smoke or fire is sighted and will identify if it is a false alarm or if it is fire in its infancy. If so, they will call on the Fire Reaction Team.

4. REACTION TEAMS - THE PURPOSE OF AN FMU IS TO PREVENT FIRE DISASTERS.... NOT FIGHT FIRES! But if a small fire can be put out or contained before it gets out of hand, then that’s a disaster averted! So each FMU tries to put together a Reaction Team - a few fit men with basic firefighting training and access to a ‘bakkie sakkie’, etc.

5. FIRE FIGHTING AIDS - the FMUs also compile a list or map of fire hydrants, ‘bakkie sakkies’, dams or swimming pools that can be accessed to fill them, people with chainsaws, fire beaters, staff equipped to fight fires, etc.

6. EVACUATION PLANS: In the event of a major fire, neighbourhooods are establishing evacuation procedures, fire breaks, creating emergency exits, identifying people who will need assistance, evacuation of pets and live-stock, etc.

For details and to join your local FMU, contact:

- Wilderness FMU: Dave 083 225 4551
- Langvlei Dunes FMU: Sharon 082 774 0360
- Kleinkrantz FMU: Ashleigh 073 780 3023
- Rondevlei FMU: Gavin 082 469 3236
- Hoekwil FMU: Barry (for now) 084 580 5182
Julie and I are going into our ninth wonderful year of living in our beautiful Wilderness and we are constantly reminded about how fortunate we are to be living amongst such a caring community.

Again, as in the past few months, Bootlegger Brewery and Blind Pig organised a very well attended “Beach Clean-up”. Over 50 locals got stuck in and did a great job of cleaning up our beach and followed up by having a some community fellowship at The Blind Pig. Thank you everyone who participated and especially the organising Team. Well done to you all!

For those of you who have a Facebook account, I urge you to join Facebook groups such as “Wilderness INFOcus”, “Wilderness Locals”, “Wild News” and of course “Wilderness Ratepayers and Residents Association” amongst others. Read about the Wilderness happenings and you will be amazed at how much our local folk and businesses are doing for our Wilderness community.

Local feel good stories abound... good Samaritans, rescued dogs and how to support local business and local initiatives.

Join in on Greenpop’s “Eden Festival of Action” by planting a tree in one of the recent fire ravaged areas. Go to their Website: www.greenpop.org and become part of the solution.

Become part of the caring Wilderness community and join in the fellowship, love and care of our very special community.

Donald Goldfain
WRRA Chair person