

FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

P O Box 442 Bergvliet 7864

WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF SA



Just another word for "stealing" - keeping in your pocket or the money you've got for it. Whether it's privatising or the money you've got for it, it's not rightfully yours.

NEWSLETTER NO 16

AUG 2000

FROM THE TOADSTOOL

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Info centre

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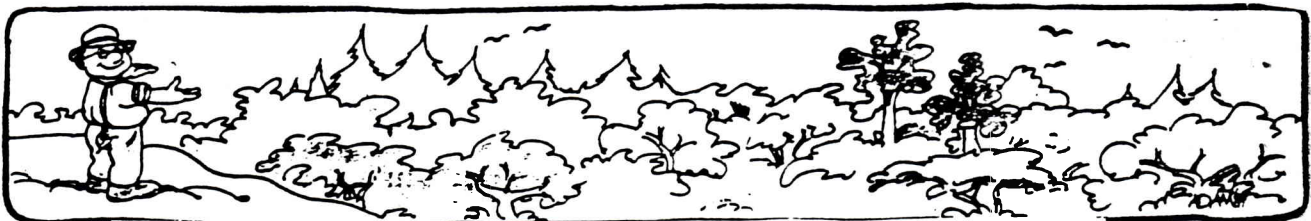
In our May newsletter we discussed the current status of the various planning initiatives, to privatise and develop State properties in the Tokai area, which have the potential to fundamentally alter it's nature. We reported on the "Integrated Environmental Management" process and the opportunity that this gives interested and affected parties, ie all of us, to participate in planning the future environment of our unique area. Often based largely on hearsay, it appears that the current status of the planning for the area is as follows:

PROJECT CHRYSALIS: The first intake of volunteers for the Chrysalis Academy of "Life- skills" at the previous William Porter Reform School will graduate after a very successful and strenuous 12 week course on Saturday 26th August. Mike Fowkes, Graham Rodgers and Sibyl Morris had the opportunity to work with Mark Hawthorne and myself two weeks ago in a joint Community Service Project with the volunteers two weeks ago. This is covered in more detail below but we were all very impressed with the appearance, willingness and hard work which many of the volunteers. We hope that this will become a regular module of the Life- Skills course in which we can participate, as 20 young men a day under proper supervision can achieve a tremendous ~~while~~ ^{em} sharing our enthusiasm for "Caring for Tokai Forest".

OTHER PORTER SCHOOL FACILITIES: There are a number of other buildings which remain under the control of other Provincial Departments. The Manor House, covered below, is under Asset Management, and the balance of the Porter School is still with Education. A number of the previous warders and staff and their families are still living in the houses. It appears that there are various negotiations in progress re a future training facility for domestic servants and gardeners. Can any one out there shed any light?

THE TOKAI MANOR HOUSE AND CP NATIONAL PARK:

Although the Provincial Cabinet appears to have approved in principle that the Manor House should be handed over to the CPNP as a showcase HQ and be renovated "before the winter rains" nothing appears to have been done. When we tried to get permission to hold our forthcoming AGM on Saturday 2nd September in the Manor House, we were informed that it is out of bounds.



"OUR MISSION: PEOPLE CARING FOR TOKAI FOREST"

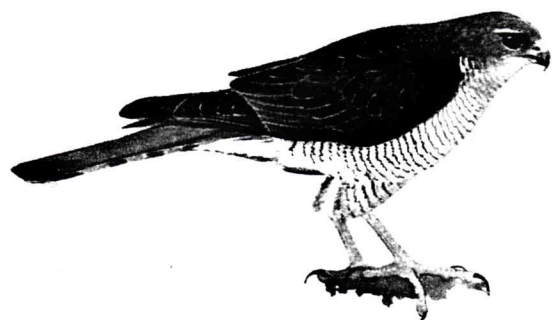
John Green (Chairman) 712-1341 / Lesley Skarzynski (Secretary) 712-2282 / Rudi Skibbe (Treasurer) 712-7653 / Gerry Higgs (Walks & PRO) 712-4176 / Les Keith (Aliens) 712-9859 / Michael Fowkes (Membership) 712-4663

We understand that officials from the Park are discussing other alternatives for co-operative use of the Manor House using the "Gateway" concept, but that asset management are exploring other avenues. There are also rumours that some of the heirlooms from the Manor House have disappeared during the Porter School closure process. Does anyone out there have any information or reasonable hearsay?

SAFCOL AND THE CPNP: there is a deathly hush at official level about the future of SAFCOL in the Western Cape, the privatisation process, and incorporation of Tokai Cecilia into the Cape Peninsula National Park integrated environmental management process. SAFCOL's Ecotourism Management appears to be concentrating on maximising revenue from mountain biking from the Arboretum parking entrance and the Lister's Place Tearoom. The Information Centre and meeting room has now been incorporated into the Tearoom, despite conditions to the contrary in the planning departure granted by the SPM after a proper public process. We have been advised that the Information Centre will no longer be available for meetings during Tearoom operating hours. (We will therefor hold our forthcoming AGM at the Wildlife and Environment Society "Sanctuary" in Kirstenhof on 2nd September.

RAPTORS OF TOKAI EXHIBIT: The good news is that, whereas I neglected to get this exhibit off the ground, Chris Botes, SAFCOL's Cape Ecotourism Manager, has initiated a fine exhibit which is now mounted on the lawn outside of Lister's Place in the Arboretum. The exhibit was developed by the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of Ornithology at UCT. It is appropriate that Prof Morne du Plessis will be our guest speaker at the AGM.

YES 2000: Youth Environmental School: the Cape Metropolitan Council's 2nd Youth Environment School programme was held at the William Porter School from the 30th May to the 3rd of June, "World Environment Week". This very successful project, despite transport problems with bus strikes and taxi wars, confirmed our long felt belief that the Tokai environment is ideal for Environmental Education and was enthusiastically supported by schools throughout the CMC area. Each day we took groups of 50 grade 5 to 7 pupils on walks and talks through the Arboretum following the "Oakleaf Trail". The four primary schools involved came from areas as wide spread as Guguletu, Mitchell's Plain and Durbanville and I was very encouraged by the intelligent questions and good behavior. We have a great future if we can empower youth like this to care for our future environment. We were only one of the 51 different activities of YES 2000. It is probable that we will be increasingly asked to lead school groups of this nature and would welcome new "Friends" who are willing conduct the occasional walk.



Next Meeting
How soon we follow
this up?
1) Find out if the names
of press persons involved?
2) Find out if the names
involved before
accept e' after?
3) Ultimate follow
up with a court
order to return
name.

R50 to
R160 !!

Info
centre

Put my
name down.

Proposed Silvermine Communications Base Development: In our May newsletter we reported that the Public Works Department from Pretoria would allow interested and affected parties the full opportunity to participate in scoping the broad parameters for development prior to any tender or Land Use rezoning applications are undertaken. They have not done this and have called for tenders based on extremely broad parameters. We will need to be extremely vigilant to prevent inappropriate development on this very important site on the slopes of Steenberg at the end of the Constantia Valley.

Where does one see or find out this information viz. tenders?

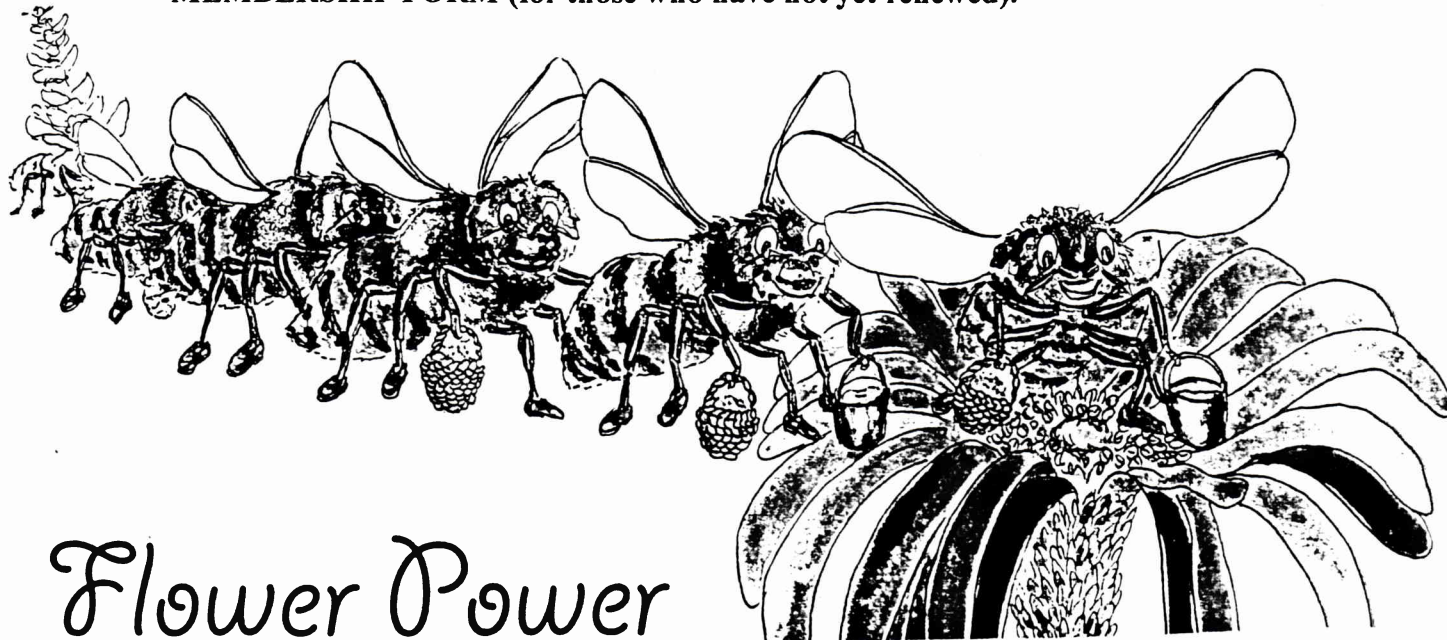
Park Seeks Solutions for Baboon Problem: Howard Langley, the Acting CPNP Manager has written a very thought provoking article in the July 2000 Park News. He writes that "The crux of the problem is that the baboons' natural range once extended over the whole of the Peninsula, and especially along the nutrient-rich coastal edges and flatlands. Most of these areas have now either been urbanised or are being extensively used for economic activity or recreation, with the result that the baboons' feeding range has been lost forever. We are trying to force the baboons to confine their activities to the undeveloped mountainous areas of the Peninsula, understandably with little success." We in Tokai, who are fortunate enough still to have relatively undeveloped mountain edges, need to be particularly sensitive not to encourage baboons to forage in our areas. For example, an open garbage "Wasteman" at Porter is an invitation for baboons to seek food more easily at Porter than in the mountains: the same can be said of the cutworms in the rotting thatch of the Manor House.



MEMBERSHIP

Michael Fowkes Tel: 7124663

The management committee decided at our May meeting to recommend to the AGM of Friends of Tokai Forest on Sat 2nd Sept 2000 to increase membership fees from R15 to R20 single and from R20 to R30 for family and group membership. Regrettably the cost of postage, printing, computer ink cartridges etc is escalating to such an extent that we can no longer afford to send out newsletters and make posters etc at the same subs rate as in 1996. The good news is that **ALL RENEWALS & NEW MEMBERS BEFORE END AUGUST 2000 WILL BE AT THE OLD RATE. PLEASE SEE ENCLOSED MEMBERSHIP FORM (for those who have not yet renewed).**



Flower Power



WALKS WITH GERRY

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higgs@dockside.co.za

The month of May saw us in the Caves above False Bay and up into the Amphitheatre. It rained in Tokai but was lovely on the other side of the mountain, starting only to rain on the return trip. Just goes to show; ya' never can tell.

No walk in June because of the school holidays- Plett and Robberg walks with the dolphins and whales cresting the slithering, silvery inky sea, made a nice change to baboons and squirrels. The diving was great too!

We made up for that loss in July with two events, our ever popular Mushroom Pickin' 'n Cookin' and a walk to the Princess's Waterfall a couple of weeks later. It's pretty hectic up in the Arboretum nowadays what with biking events, and parking has become a premium. And the weather! It doesn't know whether its Arthur or Martha. My daffodils whether they should bloom or die and my plane trees already budding with new growth desperately trying to push off last year's which is refusing to budge. Back to the mushrooms; the Boletus had come and gone in a week (unfortunately the week before the event). For those lucky enough to have "cracked it", they were as huge as dinner plates. The Pine Rings just did not have enough rain and sun to lengthen their stay in abundance. Some lovely ones were found though and lucky were those who were able to do so and cook. I "discovered" some unusual recipes on my rounds: mushrooms cooked in bacon and wine? Some cheats who brought their OWN mushrooms..... And some who tried out the recipe sheets made available and the samples of fresh herbs and cream. It smelt divine. Dr Nicki Allsopp was again a mine of information and her love of the wild and mushrooms made for interesting discussion. To pick only the edible is rather limiting; there is so much out there, that it is a science in itself: a lifeform different from the rest.

August 27th start from Arboretum towards Vlakkenberg: Maybe we go over towards Manganese Mines for a change. SAFCOL has repaired the contour path very well after the fires and forestry activity. We start our walks at 8am this year, walking buddies please note.

September 17th "Fabulous Fynbos" walk with Sibyl Morris. 2.00pm when the flowers face the sun at their best. Meet us at the Dennendal West Ave entrance to the lower Forest and bring binoculars (in reverse for magnification), a note pad in case of the inevitable "senior moment". This will also be an opportunity to see the Diastella site which has had a major "Spring Clean".

October 29th "Birding with Mark Hawthorne" at Rondevlei: Meet at the Arboretum at 8.00am or at the Vlei at 8.30. Optional ride on the vlei in a boat. Hippos? Certainly birds and Mark's intuitive and perceptive knowledge of everything that goes on around him. He is a well known educationist with a sense of humour to boot. Bring bird book, binocs and your tea hamper. There is an entrance fee to the Vlei.



**KEEPING
TRACK**

TOKAI LIFE-SKILLS PROJECT TEAMS UP WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY

Project Chrysalis, the exciting new concept of Provincial Community Safety operating from the Porter School in Tokai, has teamed up with SAFCOL, the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP) and the Friends of Tokai Forest to clear invading alien trees and to conserve rare Cape Flats Flora.

Chrysalis Academy Inaugural Graduation Ceremony



As part of their 12-week life-skills course, the 80 volunteers for the Youth at Risk programme, are required to do one week of community service. Each day this week 20 Chrysalis Volunteers have worked under the guidance of Mark Hawthorne from CPNP and John Green and other Friends of Tokai Forest wielding loppers and bow-saws. On Monday and Tuesday, they cleared fallen burnt pine trees from the lower Tokai Plantations, where SAFCOL has dedicated part of the forest to the Cape Flats Core Flora Conservation Project. In this area, some 160 species of the endangered Sandveld fynbos which used to cover the whole Cape Flats is regenerating well. Seedlings of the very rare *Diastella Proteoides* have sprung up from under the 12 original plants which were destroyed by fire in December 1998. The fallen pine logs have been used to define paths through the less sensitive areas and it is hoped that the Spring will bring a profusion of rare flowering bulbs into bloom.

On Thursday and Friday, the team has turned their attention to clearing an invasion of mainly Australian long leaf wattles and sesbania from a wetland next to the old Stone Church. This backbreaking job was complicated by prickly thickets of American brambles and lantana but Mark Hawthorne revived flagging spirits with information about the slug eating snakes, scorpions, chameleons and rain frogs which the volunteers regularly discovered.

The Friends of Tokai Forest, who are affiliated to the Wildlife and Environment Society, and the National Park congratulate the management and the first group of Project Chrysalis volunteers and look forward to working together on future courses.

**FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST AGM
SATURDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 3pm to 5pm
THE BARN, WILDLIFE & ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY
THE SANCTUARY, OFF POLLSMOOR RD, KIRSTENHOF**

**GUEST SPEAKER: PROF MORNE DU PLESSIS
PERCY FITZPATRICK INSTITUTE OF ORNITHOLOGY
"RAPTORS OF TOKAI FOREST"**

Media Advertising

**AGM ON NATIONAL ARBOR DAY
SAT 2nd SEPT: 3 TO 5pm
WILDLIFE & ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY BARN
KIRSTENHOF**

Report back on current developments impacting on Tokai Forest:
PORTER SCHOOL FUTURE: Project Chrysalis; Youth Environment
School

TOKAI MANOR HOUSE
SAFCOL PRIVATISATION
CAPE PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK
CAPE FLATS CORE FLORA CONSERVATION AREAS
PROPOSED SILVERMINE DEVELOPMENT

**Guest Speaker: Prof Morne du Plessis
"RAPTORS OF TOKAI FOREST"**

ALL WELCOME

YOUR FOREST NEEDS YOU!

**SLIDE SHOW
OUR FLORAL HERITAGE**
The beautiful flowers and scenery of the Cape Peninsula
Photographer: Sibyl Morris APSSA
Wednesday August 30th 7pm and
Saturday September 16th 10.30am
Tokai Library
Admission Free

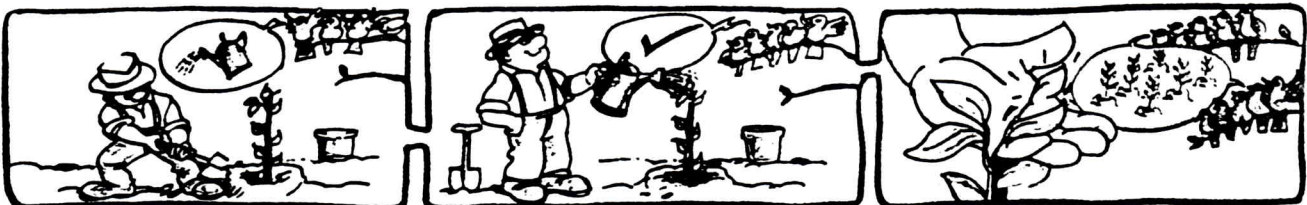
CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

SUN 17TH December

We are still looking for Friends prepared to assist in the convening of this wonderful event. Will only take a few hours of your time and most of the network is in place.

LOWER FOREST WORKPARTY

3RD SAT EACH MONTH



*Wendy Keitt-
Handing*