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WCC AGM 15 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 17H00

WCC's 13th Annual General Meeting will be held at **17h00 on 15 September at the Green House**. The meeting will be followed at 17h30 by a fascinating talk by Hayley McLennan of the Two Oceans Aquarium.

An Agenda and other relevant documents will be sent to you nearer the time.

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGN?

Hayley McLellan will address this interesting and challenging topic immediately after the WCC AGM on 14 September at 17h30. She writes:

“Addressing the overwhelming topic of environmental litter can lead one down many varied paths of debate. Add to this that the perfect intricacies of creating effective campaigns of any sort are many and often remain elusive, it is no wonder we find ourselves feeling bewildered as to how to successfully make a difference in life. With so many variables that exist it seems inevitable that not all aspects are always considered when creating calls to action.

Hundreds if not thousands of messages are rammed down our throats daily, and the environmental ones can eventually lead to an officially recognised condition called “eco-depression”.



At the Two Oceans Aquarium we approach all projects with the audience in mind and in the case of our six environmental campaigns we aim to keep the manner in which the topics are shared eye-catching, digestible and do-able. Although the delivery of the campaigns may seem to be primarily aimed at the younger generation, the overall messages can be widely applied.

Effective campaigning is about **impact** not action, **results** not effort and **outcomes** not output.”

Hayley McLellan began her career with Sea World in Durban. Ensuing years saw her dedicated to animal care, behaviour and presentations of many different species including dolphins, seals, penguins, vultures, macaws, birds of prey and many other indigenous and exotic birds. As the Environmental Campaigner at the Two Oceans Aquarium, human behaviour is her new-found inspiration.

DAVID DAVIDSON SAYS IT'S NEVER BORING

WCC was privileged to host David Davidson, a superb raconteur, on Tuesday 11 August. He held an audience of about 120 spellbound. The event was presented in partnership with Hermanus Tourism and Hermanus Botanical Society. The lovely snacks and displays outside the auditorium enhanced the occasion.

The SANBI-Kirstenbosch team received Silver Gilt for its 40th exhibit at the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show. The display included a retrospective tableau of memorable exhibits and a display of "Plants South Africa gave the World".

David vividly described the events leading up to the show, when it looked as if the stand might not be completed in the allotted time. The new shipping agent in South Africa was inexperienced in the complexities of dealing with CITES regulations and there was an equally inexperienced customs official in London. This meant that the whole consignment of flowers was held up at Heathrow airport. With only hours to go before the cut off time, only part of the consignment had been released, and then not the feature plants.

Then there unfolded a story of camaraderie. Once it became clear that the whole consignment was not going to get there and after the South African predicament was featured on TV, exhibitors from other countries responded with warmth and generosity, offering what they could to fill the gaps.

In the end, a silver-gilt was a major achievement. Next to the sign "Plants SA gave the World", another one said "Plants the World gave SA". "We showed the botanical and cultural diversity of a range of geographic locations, botanical gardens and biomes of South Africa," explained Davidson.



WCC Board Member Dr Pat Miller sang David's praises when thanking him for his highly informative and entertaining presentation.

Once again, the important role that botanical gardens play in contributing to the country's tourism statistics was underscored. As a snapshot to the country's botanical heritage, it is these gardens coupled with the wide variety of unusual attractions that bring many visitors to the country.

BELLE BARKER ENTERTAINED ON 90TH BIRTHDAY

On Friday 21 August Belle celebrated her 90th birthday at a soup and sherry evening with the Hermanus Botanical Society. As always, Belle did not want to receive, but chose to give instead. She shared with the capacity audience her life experiences, illustrated with beautiful slides of flowers and birds taken by her late husband, Peter, a "photoboy".

Each photograph was explained and enhanced by lyrical descriptions. She also connected structure and function of the fynbos flowers, describing how the flowers evolved in structure to attract their particular pollinators and seed dispersers.



Belle Barker, second from left, talked to Frank Woodvine, Lee Burman and Di Marais (right) after the talk.

Belle's immeasurable contribution to the knowledge and appreciation of Fynbos was recognised some years ago when she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Whale Coast Conservation.

In the last few years Belle has not been able to walk to the top of the Fernkloof mountains, but she devotes her time to meticulous work in the herbarium – and baking irresistible cookies.

Belle is a born teacher and has transferred her knowledge to a group of younger (well, younger than 90) enthusiasts.

Thank you, Belle.

MAYOR'S EVENING OF EXCELLENCE 2015

Great White Shark Conservation was the winner at the Mayor's Awards. This underlined the value placed on wildlife conservation by our municipality, in particular the endangered great whites. They are more valuable alive than dead.

The winner of the award for environmental excellence was Michael "Shark Man" Rutzen. Mike campaigns for

Great White Shark conservation, but is perhaps best known for his fantastic free diving with these iconic top predators.

In a double win for shark conservation, the woman of the Year 2015 was Kim “Sharklady” Mc Lean. She was honoured for both raising awareness of this endangered member of the South African “Top Seven”, and for her selfless work in the community.



Mike Rutzen and Kim McLean, we salute you and appreciate your valuable contribution to the Whale Coast community.

DR GEORGE HUGHES TALKED TURTLE

An audience of about 75 gathered at the Green House on 26 August to hear a good news conservation story.

Dr George Hughes gave a fascinating account of the research and conservation work on turtles that he pioneered in 1963. It is a remarkable story of how education and information about the perilous state of sea turtle populations influenced communities and led to conservation efforts in many parts of the world.

Dr Hughes talked passionately about these remarkable reptiles that have been around for 100 million years. The largest is the leatherback turtle that nests (together with loggerhead turtles) on our north eastern shores. They can grow to 3m in length. Female turtles always return to the nesting site where they hatched, even thousands of kilometres from their feeding sites. They navigate according to the magnetic memory of the location set in their brains during incubation. But how do they navigate back to their feeding grounds, or if they are removed to locations thousands of kilometres away? Even George

doesn't know. But they will swim non-stop for months with unerring direction back to where they belong.

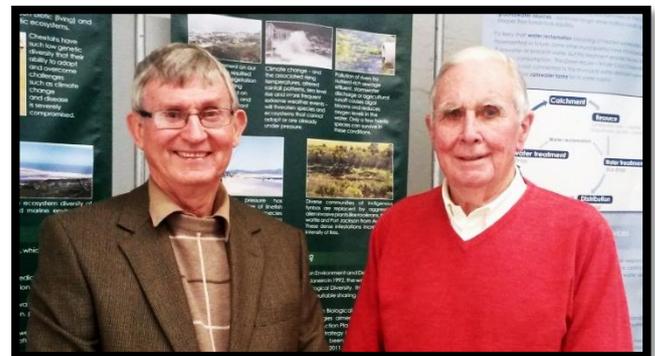
Female turtles reach breeding maturity around age 25 years. They will only breed if their nutritional state is optimal, which may be infrequent, depending on the availability of food. They can then lay as many as 5 clutches of around 100 eggs during a breeding season.

Some turtles can regulate body temperature to 31° C even in arctic waters. How does a reptile do this? It has a heat-exchange mechanism in the front flippers that acts like a heat pump.

And what about the baby turtles that washed out on the Cape coast this year? George replied as follows:

“Yes I am aware of the large strandings this year and I have no doubt that some of them had plastic fragments in the gut but it is unlikely that they died from the plastic. It is more likely that they died of cold. These flotillas of hatchlings are coming down the coast in ‘blue’ and warm Agulhas water. If there is a very strong SE wind the current leaves the coast and is replaced by upwelled and very cold water. This immobilises the little hatchlings which are then blown ashore. The largest stranding of which I am aware was about 400 hatchlings found dead on the beach.”

When I asked George to summarise his talk, he replied “Turtles are very cute.” I agree.



Dr George Hughes chatted to WCC Patron Judge Mark Kumleben before his presentation.

The talks in August were supported by the National Lotteries Commission.

HELP TO CLEAN UP OUR COAST

Whale Coast Conservation will join the international community to take part in International Coastal Clean-up in Hermanus on Friday 18 September at 10h00. Everyone is urged to come along and be part of this worthwhile and fun activity.

We will gather on the lawn in front of the Marine Hotel at 10h00, divide into groups and receive instructions about where each group will collect litter. After an hour of cleaning, bags of litter will be collected from each group and transported to the end point of the clean-up in front of the Windsor Hotel.

There we will tackle the interesting task of analysing and quantifying the types of litter items we collected. WCC is particularly interested in one of the most abundant litter items – cigarette butts. Cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate, a kind of plastic that does not biodegrade. These filters, with the tar and other toxins trapped in them, end up polluting the ocean. WCC is embarking on a campaign to enable smokers to dispose of cigarette butts in a more responsible way.



WCC staff analysing litter collected at ICC 2014

The clean-up area includes the Hermanus Biodiversity Walk, devised by David Beattie, Chairman of the Cliff Path Management Group. Signage along the walk describes the biodiversity, culture and geology of the spectacular coastline along which it runs.

WCC AT THE HERMANUS FLOWER FESTIVAL

Whale Coast Conservation is pleased to once again partner with the Hermanus Botanical Society at the Hermanus Flower Festival from 24 to 27 September.

The Flower Festival theme this year is “Fynbos Creatures” and WCC will highlight, amongst other things, “Coastal Creatures” in our separate display marquee. This marquee – on the lower lawn in the Fernkloof garden – will also house the children’s activities, including stories by Stripes the Eco Cat.

In support of the coastal theme, WCC will illustrate the journey of water from mountain catchment to coast and the impact people have along this journey.



We will also demonstrate citizen science projects. One of these projects is monitoring the distribution of frogs. Sheraine van Wyk reported Western Leopard Toads (above) breeding successfully in the middle of Stanford. What good news for this endangered frog.

We will explain what a Hope Spot is, why we love our Cape Whale Coast Hope Spot and what programmes are promoting the ideals of a Hope Spot.

Nick and Amanda Ellwanger, PhD candidates from the USA, are based at WCC while they are conducting doctoral studies on baboons. Nick is doing nutritional studies on a troop at Salmonsdam where they have no contact with humans and their food. Amanda will study the attitudes of humans towards baboons in a troop that mostly forages in the vineyards of the Hemel and Aarde Valley. They will be at the Festival to discuss their research over the next 18 months.

By popular demand WCC will again demonstrate how to save energy and how to laugh off load shedding by installing one of the WCC energy back-up kits. Rob Fryer will be on hand with all the relevant advice.

The WCC exhibits are supported by the National Lotteries Commission.

THANKS TO OUR GREEN DIAMOND AND GREEN EMERALD INVESTORS IN THE ENVIRONMENT



Compiled by Anina Lee and made possible by the National Lotteries Commission.

