



AfriForum

'n Inisiatief van Solidariteit
An initiative of Solidarity



BILTONG BULLETIN

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Dear Readers!

As usual, we start with the formalities: To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, send your comments or a contribution, contact us at alana@solidariteit.co.za. This free newsletter for South Africans living abroad appears on a monthly basis in both Afrikaans and English. New subscribers are always most welcome. Remember that even though we select our advertisers with great care, we cannot guarantee their services and cannot be held responsible for their actions.

BOOKWORM'S CORNER



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WEB SITES

The former magazine *Insig* recently published ten of the most popular South African web addresses. They include:

1. www.artthrob.co.za – all about South African art.
2. www.24.com – the first broadband portal for South Africans, including many other services.
3. www.kickoff.co.za – “the best South African soccer site”.
4. www.samp3.com – download free local music and use useful links, such as the link to the SA Music Encyclopaedia.
5. www.litnet.co.za – for authors, poets, debating, philosophers and of course ... readers!

CAUSE OF THE MONTH: TOLL FEES – YES OR NO?

AfriForum will appeal to the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) to reconsider the proposed levying of toll on highways in Gauteng. As part of the appeal a campaign has been launched which invites members of the public to add their inputs in this regard to AfriForum's appeal. This can be done by sending their contact details to AfriForum

via the web site www.afriforum.co.za, by email to afriforum@afriforum.co.za, or by fax to **012-6641281**. They are also welcome to include more information about ways in which the proposed toll fees will impact on their lives.

AfriForum's statement follows SANRAL's announcement that a proposal that motorists in Gauteng will soon have to pay 50c per kilometre to use the province's highways, has recently been tabled at the Portfolio Committee on Public Transport, Roads and Works in the Gauteng legislature.

According to AfriForum an increase of this kind will be to the detriment of all South Africans. The average South African worker already pays 25% of his income in direct taxes and a further \pm 25% in indirect taxes. To expect of him/her to pay even more in the shape of such absurdly high toll fees, is unacceptable. Any levy of this nature will not only have a grave impact on those who use the Gauteng highways themselves, but will influence all South Africans negatively. If these toll levies were to be implemented, it would hit the poorest of the poor the hardest. In the end the consumers will have to absorb the toll fees and we therefore can expect nationwide increases in food and building costs, to name but a few examples. Where the State already collects such a high percentage of tax from residents, spending has to be monitored more effectively and alternative sources have to be found for the improvement of transport infrastructure, in order that toll levies of this nature will not be necessary.

NATURE CONSERVATION



- **Beeld** reported on 10 October 2007 that a whale that got entangled in fishing lines near Muizenberg was freed after 40 minutes of hard and dangerous work. The photo is by Garth Stead and more photos can be seen www.beeld.com.
- The other interesting news was that an iceberg had reportedly been seen by a fishing boat's crew approximately 60 kilometres from St. Francis Bay. Since the initial sighting, it could not be found by other shipping, aircraft or satellites again. Icebergs have been sighted in this area before in 1942/3, 1830 and 1789.
- A new mammal species, an elephant shrew which weighs approximately 47 grams only, has been discovered in the Central Karoo.

SOUTH AFRICAN NEWS SNIPPETS — SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2007

- Have you subscribed to ***Biltong Bites***, our daily free email with a summary of the main articles of the day as published in *Beeld*, *Pretoria News*, *Business Day* and *Citizen* yet? Not? Well, subscribe now by sending an e-mail with the subject "Bites" to alana@solidariteit.co.za.
- South Africa's more than 2 000 independent schools provide education for more than 400 000 learners, of whom about 30% are white and 58% are black. As these schools do not receive state subsidies, they save the State approximately R1,5-billiard per year.
- Only 74% South African's are of the opinion that it is unacceptable for a husband to beat his wife. The rest either feel that it is sometimes acceptable, or even always acceptable!
- The surface area of the country which will be planted with wheat in the coming season, will be the smallest since 1934, namely 629 500 hectares.
- Egyptian businessmen have invested R3,2-billiard in a new cement factory near Mafikeng.
- Filming of *Hansie*, a movie about South African cricket captain Hansie Cronjé's life, is currently taking place.
- Legendary Springbok rugby player, Hansie Brewis, passed away in Pretoria during September. He was 87.
- A new golden-coloured rose has been named after swimming sensation, Ryk Neethling.
- The interest rate has been increased once again by the SA Reserve Bank on 11 October 2007 – a step which will have a negative influence on the property market.
- Four new pay-TV-channels received licences to broadcast in South Africa. They are Telkom Media, e.SAT, On Digital Media and Walking on Water.
- Gift Leremi, soccer star of Mamelodi Sundowns and Bafana Bafana, died in a car crash in September.
- Mavuso Msimang, director-general of the Department of Home Affairs, has undertaken to revamp the department within a year. Alas, he is not the first person to promise this ... and the department's service delivery reaches ever lower levels. AfriForum's complaint against the department in this regard is still pending with the Public Protector.
- Marlene Dumas, South African artist, has been awarded the prestigious German Dusseldorf Prize for her work. She has been living in The Netherlands since 1976.
- The ANC have called for 27 street names in Pretoria to be changed in order to honour people who played a role in the liberation struggle. These streets include Schoeman-, Van der Walt-, Pretorius-, Paul Kruger-, Charles- and Queen Wilhelmina Street.
- In an exercise between the South African and Navo fleets, a South African submarine vanquished Navo's fleet during a mock battle.
- Five San of the Kalahari have been used as artists for a new set of South African coins introduced by the SA Mint. The coins are known as the 2007 Natura Series and all depict eland. All sets were sold out within 24 hours.
- The Minister of Health has announced that the salaries of nurses will be increased with between 20 and 88% this year. According to the Minister of Education, teachers will receive increases of between 1 and 40% in 2008.
- Maties is the 2007 club rugby champion after beating Tukkies with 24-8.
- The South African wine industry has finally succeeded in getting cheap wine sold in plastic bags and bottles prohibited.
- The Department of Land Affairs has asked the public to comment on foreign ownership of South African land. A report on this matter can be found at <http://land/pwv.gov.za>. Comments may be sent to plof@dla.gov.za. The closing date for comments is the 6th of November 2007.
- Foreign travel agents allegedly are hesitant to market South Africa as holiday destination as a result of a lack of available flights to South Africa.
- Doctor Jan van Heerden, better known under the pseudonym of Jan van Elfen, has died in September at the age of 80. He wrote medical books which are to be found in many a South African household, such as *Childcare*.
- Reverend Thabo Cecil Makgoba, bishop of Grahamstown, has been appointed as Anglican bishop of Cape Town in the place of Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, who is retiring after 11 years in this position.

WELSYN



The disappearance of Madeleine McCann has focused the world's attention once more on the fate of children who vanish. Sadly this is not an uncommon event in South Africa either.

The web site www.missingchildren.co.za tries to relocate such children as quickly as possible, and to make parents aware of their children's safety once again. Pieter Boshoff of this site (contact number 0027-72-6477464) writes in this regard:

"The myth exists that you need to wait 24 hours in South Africa before reporting a disappearance – it is nonsense, people watch too many American movies ... We help children, never mind how rich or poor they are. One little girl's mother was a housekeeper, and three weeks ago we helped the CEO of a major company to find his son. Money and suburb is of no consequence – it may happen to everybody."

The site states:

This site has to do with one aspect of crime and that is against South Africa's youth and especially those that easily fall prey to unscrupulous and evil people. It is a known fact that the first 24 hours are crucial when a child disappears. We shall post downloadable colour pictures (to be provided) and as many details as possible about the child, possible suspects and as much on the circumstances around the case. With this information being released while the trail is still hot, the chances of success are much greater and that is where our readers come in. The more people on the lookout, the better become the chances of pertinent information being made available to the police. Once the community gets involved criminals will find that they will be hunted relentlessly - not only by the police. We have spoken to the families of children who have experienced these traumatic events. Things they never thought would happen to them. But they did happen. Newspapers and the other media cannot report extensively on every case, but we do need the information to go out to the public. Our children have to be safe and parents should be secure in the knowledge that neighbours and other members of the community will walk the extra mile for our youth. In some cases it may be the doings of a naughty child, but we have to be aware that it may be a real serious event that is unfolding. Posting the information on this website is totally free and will never be charged for. We have to care for one another. We don't have to be friends with the people involved, but we have to help care for them and the children. It can happen to people from an affluent community and it can happen to someone from a disadvantaged area. It makes no difference. Nobody should have to go through a trauma like this and we all have the responsibility to eradicate this evil. Please visit us daily so you can be a South African citizen who cares. You will help reduce pain and heartache and be a responsible citizen others can be proud to know.

Thank you for any support which you may lend this cause!

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Old-fashioned “Souskluitjies” (Sweet Dumplings)



It has been raining for days. I miss the times when I, as small child, spent such days with my family around Granny Anna's kitchen table and waited for some or other miracle to appear from the kitchen. Sometimes, if Granny got up early enough, or if Granddad would help her to knead the dough, it would be *vetkoek* – shiny elastic bits of dough transformed into crispy brown nuggets in the oil, drenched in butter and home-made apricot jam. At other times, it was popcorn. Granddad also helped with that. It felt like an eternity before those kernels started popping! We would pass the time by staring at the small blue Delft tiles all around the stove. Once I got impatient and peeped into the pot just as the first corn popped – splattering my nose with boiling oil. OUCH! Granny used butter and a kiss to fix all. One year cousins Marianna, Edelweiss and I helped Granny to bake cookies for Christmas. The deal was that we could eat all the cookies that broke during the process. I am ashamed to admit that the cookies suffered an abnormal amount of damage. Granny pretended to notice nothing strange and we tucked into the *Ant' Martha-koekies*, ginger nuts, *soetkoekies* and crunchies. Were very sick when we got home ... The stove stood on a cement base on the wooden floor, and in the corner next to it, there was a small hole. We were very excited to see a tiny mouse-face peeping out of that hole one day. Granny regarded the mouse as a sign of huge damage to come and was furious: “Jan, go and get the mousetraps immediately!” We tagged after Granddad, crying: “Please Granddad, don't kill the poor little mouse, please???” He said he would make a plan. He set the traps, but when Granny took the tea to the sitting-room, he helped us to pour all kinds of snacks down the hole to ensure that the mouse would be too well-fed to look at the dry piece of Cheddar in the trap. What eventually happened to that mouse, I do not know. We never saw him again. Granddad's explanation was that wild animals prefer to be free in the great big world and he assumed that the mouse had left. In all probability Granny got to him with the broom when we had left, or maybe he passed away after over-eating, as a result of our rescue operation ... Today I have almost all of Granny's recipes for rainy weather comfort foods. I am able to make all of the dishes quite well, but somehow it just does not taste like Granny's products. In the end, I suppose, love probably is the most important ingredient when cooking ... I am now craving *souskluitjies* above all, and I have found the following recipe for you ...

Dumplings:

250 ml cake flour
2 ml salt
1 egg

10 ml baking-powder
50 ml margarine / butter
100 ml milk

Sauce:

500 ml boiling water
cinnamon sugar

25 ml margarine / butter

Sift the dry ingredients. Rub 50 ml margarine into the mixture until it resembles breadcrumbs. Whisk the egg and milk together, stir into the flour mixture and mix to form soft dough. Add more milk if necessary. Heat water and 25 ml margarine to boiling point in a saucepan. Add spoonfuls of dough to the boiling water. Close the lid and leave to boil for 15 minutes. Do not open the lid while the dumplings are boiling. Spoon dumplings with a draining-spoon into a deep serving dish. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Boil water in which the dumplings were boiled once again, add cinnamon sugar to taste and pour over the dumplings. Add more water if necessary.

LETTERS, MARKET SQUARE AND REQUESTS

[Letters are published in the language in which we receive them.]

- **Evandren writes from Australia:** I just read the letter sent in to the Biltong Bulletin's August/September edition, from Willa in New Zealand. I must say it touched me to read how much she loved her culture and South Africa, and most of all how much she *appreciated* her new country. In recent times I have travelled a lot, and I can't say that I have seen a lot of happiness in this world. So it was refreshing to come across such optimism and enthusiasm.
- **Jaco writes from New Zealand:** Baie dankie vir 'n mooi uitgelegde inligtingswerf. Ek dink egter dit kort verwysing na volwre navorsing en is dus nutteloos, en kan net gesien word as een mens se uitkyk en waarnemings (een mens wat sekerlik nog nie die buiteland besoek of daar gewoon het nie). Die feit bly staan dat enige buitelandse ondervinding vir 'n jong afrikaner meer kan beteken as enige ander naskoolse opleiding. Suid-Afrika was stabiel verklaar deur die VN tussen 1962 en 1992. Daar word egter beweer dat die navorsing nou toon dat Suid Afrika in 'n groep van "onbewoonbare lande" (direkte vertaling) val. So kan jy enige jongmens blameer as hy die gemors wat in ons land ontstaan het wil verlaat en 'n ander heenkome vind. Is die wit Suid-Afrikaner se hele geskiedenis nie gewortel in immigrer, trek en boer nie. Ons gaan nou 'n nuwe fase van ons volk se geskiedenis binne. 'n Fase waar die met wilskrag en uithouvermoë terugkeer na die lande waarvandaan hulle ontstaan het. Laastens dink ek julle kostes vir immigrasie is totaal ongesubstansieer en dus nutteloos. Groete uit 'n rustige land(NZ).
[We have not answered Jaco yet, because we don't want to get into the over-exposed "go or stay" debate again, but maybe someone would like to respond to the issues raised by Jaco? By the way, we do use research for our web site. In the end, the fact remains that **no-one** can decide on your behalf whether to emigrate, or not, as no-one is able to stand in your shoes and to comprehend all factors contributing to the decision. One's only obligation to yourself and your dependants is to make an informed choice!]
- Re returning, **Richard Crouch writes from the USA:** All the red tape and regulations makes returning home for expatriates an enormous ordeal. The public overtures by President Mbeki's government to entice skilled South African's back home are nothing but a farce. For South African's living abroad for the past 10 or 20 years returning home is a huge undertaking, selling a house, moving personal belongings immigration for spouse and children. None of this is made any easier by the current government. South African's living in the United States for example have the additional problem of their vehicles. The regulations set forth by the SABS (South African Bureau of Standards) are pretty narrow, they are as follows:
 - Left hand drive vehicles must have been manufactured before 1 January 2000;
 - The vehicle must have been registered to the importer (you) before 1 January 2000;
 - If the vehicle is manufactured before 1 January 2000 but after 1 January 1997, you must get a letter from the manufacturer stating that the vehicle complies with EU standards. (That eliminates every US made vehicle in that category because none comply with those standards).

So, basically what you are left with is a vehicle that is manufactured before 1 January 1997. Well, two of my four vehicles were manufactured in 1996 and comply with all of the above requirements. When I submitted my application to SABS I get an email back that simply states "Left hand drive vehicles are not allowed in South Africa". Now that statement is blatantly inaccurate. Yes left hand drive vehicles are not allowed in South Africa EXCEPT for the exceptions listed above. They obviously did not know their own law, did not read the entire application or want to make it as hard as possible for returning South Africans. It is an unnecessary burden to impose on these returning citizens to expect them to sell, at a loss, their vehicles that are already paid for and have to purchase new vehicles at four times the price on their arrival in South Africa, in addition to purchasing a new house and the other moving related expenses. Another problem that returning South Africans encounter is the fact that you cannot open a bank account unless you are physically in South Africa. How are you supposed to bring millions of Rand with you if you do not have an account to electronically transfer it to, are you supposed to pack you pockets and bags with cash? It should be as simple as going

to the SA Consulate in the country you are currently living in, proving your identity and then opening the bank account through the SA Consulate. Maybe that is too simple for the government types. If the government really wanted to entice skilled South African's back home they would cut some of the red tape and make some exceptions for the returning citizens. Or maybe they see the returning citizens as a threat to them as most of them are white and they feel that they would more than likely vote for a party other than the ANC.

[Richard's web site is at www.anewsouthafrica.com. You are welcome to visit him!]

- **Leslee, previously from the USA, now in Johannesburg, asks:** Is there any interest in a support group for foreign spouses of South Africans living in South Africa? If there is, then let me know. I will be happy to help with the organization of such a group! Settling in South Africa can be a traumatic experience. It will be ideal to share your experience with others who are in the same boat. Any ideas in this regard? Please let us know at alana@afirforum.co.za.

This is all for now. Thank you for your time and kind regards!

Alana & colleagues

AfriForum

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