

The Hogsback Times

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A HUGE BIG FAT
THANK YOU TO YOU
ALL!

FOR PARTICIPATING,
FOR CONTRIBUTING
&
FOR READING!

Editor's Desk

What a surprisingly busy August. Usually the wind is the hardest worker during a Hogsback August.

This month brought us some real snow, a woman's day launch of Oom Hogsback/Emergency group triage, Hogsback Pulse and two RE-openings with launch 2.0 of The Hog & Dragron as well as Mud & Moss Montessori.

There was also a lot more action on the emergency group, thankfully not as bad as we know it could have been; but still... Rodger rescued Rory B from a needy doom, Jimmy nearly burnt his house down, then Jason tested his fairy wings, needless to say; they proved defective and he ended up with stitches, bruises, a limp and aches and pains that have – hopefully – subsided by now. And then our dogs decided to see who wants to play hide-and-seek at 1am; crash-boom-bang near Binfield and a week after the first doggo got a bling collar, Molly decide she wants to play too. A Mullins motor reminded us that spontaneous combustion is a real thing, Ryan played cowboys and crooks against his own team and to end off August, a guests decided to lie down and 'touch grass'... when in Rome... you know.

Stop feeling guilty for giggling, we have to laugh, smile at least. If we can't...we might find ourselves in the same place that lost socks and Larry's go... I hear you! lost socks are no joking matter...

Well, by the time you read this, Spring would have sprung (according to the calendar at least); so instead of filling the August issue of HBT with my rampant, lightly-filtered intolerance of our governing bodies, bad service, self-serving authority and alike; I chose to shine some sun on our sht-show this month.

You do have a few options though, I am in fact pro-choice. So do something about it (act/retaliate/ speak up), or have a chuckle and continue to pretend we don't have problems (Smile and wave boys), of course you are allowed to take offense too (as long as you remember I never gave you a fence, you decided you want to take one)... in that case... please see if you can find my left Daisy&Dash sock and bring it with upon your return.

So here's to August: messy, uncomfortable and full of accidental clarity.

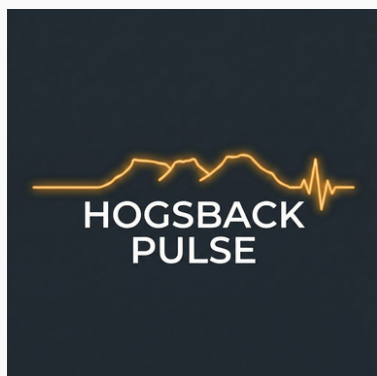
Love,
Miki

By Community. For Community. On Community.

NEWS, UPDATES & FEEDBACK

For Local Residents Only

PRACTICAL PULSE



**New to Hogsback?
Been here forever?
Either way, this a
channel worth
following.**

Hogsback Pulse is a simple, central place for what's happening on the mountain; from weather alerts, who's running what specials, who's open, village news, events, important updates.

It's probably the best way to keep your finger on the pulse of Hogsback without filling your phone with **20 posters, adverts and forwarded messages every day.**

See for yourself:
Follow Hogsback Pulse.
<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaB2QEplnqlbztT9S2l>

HOGSBACK LOCAL DISCOVERS GOLD!

Forget the fairies, say no more about snow. Hogsback may have been sitting on a gold mine all along.

Just when we thought Hogsback had run out of ways to surprise us, a local resident has discovered gold. Yes... Actual gold, not golden autumn leaves.
Not a shiny rock; GOLD!

A Hogsback local, who wishes to remain anonymous for safety reasons (because apparently we now have to protect people from hordes of desperate prospectors with metal detectors); recently discovered a gold nugget on their property.

And it wasn't exactly tiny...13.3 grams of the big AU!

He said: *"This nugget weighed in at 14 grams dirty but with all the iron oxides and dirt cleaned off by soaking in rust remover, it came in at 13.3 grams. It was down about 10 cm and was a real screamer on my detector when it was out of the ground. It was part of a new nugget patch that I found which had never been detected before."*

Will Hogsback soon be overrun by prospectors digging up perfectly innocent flower beds? Who'll discover the next one? And where?
(SIDE NOTE: Every hole you dig in your garden, could be one less hole in our road.)

Gold rushes start somewhere...Someone finds a nugget, they tell someone else; word spreads and before you know it, there are 47 people standing in the veld at sunrise, waving metal detectors around.

Hogsback: Come for the fairies, stay for the gold.



By Community. For Community. On Community.

NEWS, UPDATES & FEEDBACK

For Local Residents Only

MUD & MOSS OPEN



A huge thank you to the Hogsback community for turning out in numbers for the Mud and Moss Montessori Pre-School opening. The support for our little ones and their teachers was incredible! For those who missed it, the morning was filled with singing, happy children, parents pitching in and lots of exciting developments. The jungle gym got some extra safety attention, the classrooms received beautiful Montessori learning materials and the children were spoiled with new backpacks, beanies, lunch boxes, water bottles, T-shirts and a wonderful collection of books. Than you to all sponsors and contributors.

It was a lovely reminder of what can happen when a community gets behind its children: people contribute, lend a hand, share what they can and help create something meaningful together.

Thank you, Hogsback, for showing up and showing you care!

HTO ELECTIONS - 17 SEPT. 2026

To all TPOs: This is to confirm that the HTO Elections are postponed to Thursday 17 September at 5pm to ensure that all people nominated for election are present in Hogsback.

The following nominations have been received and accepted by the candidates:

Chairperson: Siya Gxothiwe

Deputy Chairperson: Francois Rautenbach

Secretary: Janice Adlam

Treasurer: Joanne Campbell

Additional Members/Task Team Coordinators: Ruby Hales, Bella Khashe, Mornay Van Vuuren

All TPOs are invited to attend, but only paid-up members may stand for election and vote. Further nominations can be made right up to the actual elections. Candidates must accept the nominations.

Candidates will be invited to speak about what they are offering the HTO and answer any questions from the floor. Brief reports on the 2026 Christmas in July and the Winter Quest will be presented before the elections.

- Fiona Wallace for Hogsback Tourism Organisation

WELCOME BACK POLLINATORS

I have a few favourite dates, one of which is the 1st of September! And in the spirit of Spring day; I thought I'd share this useful Sting pain scale; created by the 'King of Sting', not the Nathan Fielder character, the entomologist Justin O Schmidt... who famously subjected himself to hundreds of insect stings to measure their intensity and duration for science.

While Hogsbackians won't encounter the infamous Level4 Bullet Ant on our trails, we'll certainly run into Level 2 stingers; most notably the Western Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera capensis/scutellata*) and various native paper wasps, as hive activity spikes this month.

The Schmidt Insect Sting Pain Index. Source: bionity.com / Schmidt Insect Sting Pain Index

Top:
The Schmidt Insect Sting Pain Index. Source: bionity.com / Schmidt Insect Sting Pain Index

Right:
New York Times' photo of The King of Sting himself, Justin O Schmidt



By Community. For Community. On Community.

The Hogsback ~~Community~~ Whines

SUGGESTIVE SPLUMA

RMM SOLVES LEGALITY: ‘If You Ignore SPLUMA Hard Enough, It Ceases to Exist’

In a historic breakthrough for municipal administration, Raymond Mhlaba Municipality has unveiled a revolutionary legal framework for event planning: simply pretending national legislation does not exist. The groundbreaking doctrine, successfully deployed this week for the Music in the Snow festival on Farm 178, proves that raw, unserviced agricultural grazing land can be instantly transformed into a gazetted “Public Amenity” using nothing more than municipal letterhead and sheer force of will.

When confronted with minor details such as missing Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act departures, active Section 62 appeals, and a complete absence of valid fire clearances, municipal leadership remained untroubled. Municipal Manager Ms U. Malinzi clarified in writing that local by-laws quietly override national statutes, while confirming that safety, security, and basic site verification are strictly somebody else’s problem—specifically the South African Police Service.

The administrative masterstroke was further bolstered by RMM’s handling of land ownership. Despite attaching a WinDeed property search proving Portion 1 is owned by the South African Development Trust and Portion 2 by the national Minister of Land Affairs, RMM boldly declared itself the sole owner anyway, establishing that reading one’s own attached evidence is entirely optional.

When the festival setup hit last-minute delays, organizers swiftly deployed advanced public relations maneuvers. In an official social media statement, the late start was attributed to “felled trees” from protests, accompanied by an impassioned appeal to the Rainbow Nation. When residents noted that the primary statutory objection came directly from the Bold Point Community Council fighting for their commonage grazing land, social media commentators countered with a thrilling geopolitical plot twist: a covert conspiracy involving shadowy puppet-masters secretly distributing funded chainsaws to residents in a forestry village.

Local cattle on Portion 0 have reportedly expressed mild concern over the 3,000-watt bassline echoing across their unserviced pasture, but municipal sources insist the livestock failed to submit a formal PAIA form within thirty days. Under RMM’s new operational guidelines, as long as out-of-town visitors have already arrived, all environmental noise thresholds, national land titles, and statutory appeals automatically vanish into the mountain mist.



NOTE:

In the coming days there’s bound to be more developments regarding this weekend’s events. The months, weeks, days and then hours leading up to the event is also something I’d love to share and credit. We’ll explore this in the September HBT. In the meantime...

– Miki

FROM THE FOREST FLOOR

Lately I've noticed many people bring up the term "forest bathing" again...

Now while no one will judge you if your thoughts went straight to a certain magical cliff bath over the edge of our oldest indigenous forest, forest bathing does not refer to cleansing oneself in a bathtub in the middle of forest either, instead it refers to walking in nature, in forests, spending time in the forest, laying down on the forest floor, hugging and connecting to the trees! Sitting in the forest, meditating, breathing in what the forest offers, and breathing out in turn, what the forest breathes in, realizing we are one with nature.

If you Google the term it roughly reads as follow:

The term "Forest bathing" or shinrin-yoku (which directly translates to forest bath) is the mindful practice of immersing your senses in a natural forest atmosphere. Originating in Japan in the 1980s, it is a slow, meditative form of nature therapy focused on sights, sounds, and smells rather than physical exercise.

Now science shows that doing this lowers cortisol levels, blood pressure, and heart rate!

On a natural herbal medicine view point forest bathing exposes you to phytoncides (natural plant oils) that increase white blood cell activity. So you are truly becoming healthier using by showing up!

Doing this obviously improves your mood, helps you focus, and calms you down through parasympathetic nervous system activation.

Now if all this sounds super woo-hoo, it's actually super simple to do! Simply turn off your phone (ok maybe not that easy for some lol) and take stroll through the closest forest!

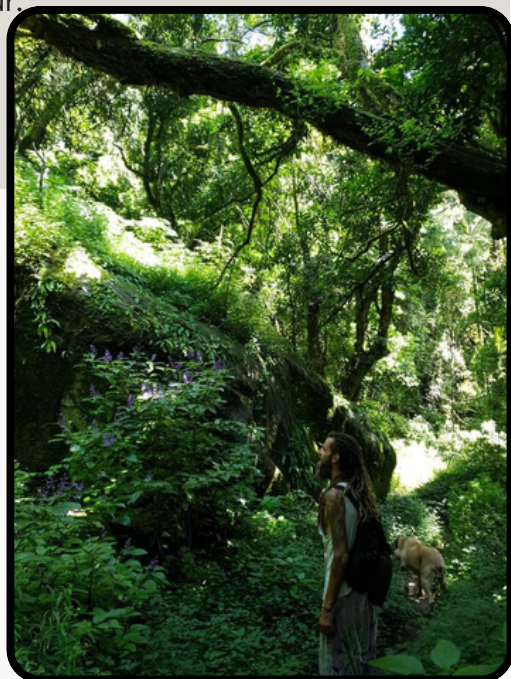
Now comes the fun part, take note of everything around you, feel of the bark on the different trees, the different shades of green from the leaves, to the grasses to the moss, the sounds of the birds, the critters, the monkeys, baboons and chainsaws... now breath, take long, slow deep breaths. Smell all the different smells that the forest offers, take in all the goodness and nourishment that surrounds you, know that all works in your favour.

We are nature, we need nature to be whole

And like always, only take memories and only leave footprints.

Stay wild

Adi Forestbeing



By Community. For Community. On Community.

ECHOES & LEGENDS

THE LAST SEED

My second-oldest son's favourite book at the moment is *The Lorax* by Dr Seuss. It's a story about the Truffula Tree, how it is destroyed by greedy "Once-lers" and the hope that remains when the Lorax, who is the guardian and voice of the forest, preserves the last Truffula seed.

Hogsback's very own Lorax, Michelle Griffiths, is selling her family home and leaving the mountain on a new adventure. I met Michelle a few years ago, and we've had many deep and meaningful conversations about all things related to the natural environment. She has a wealth of knowledge about the Amatoles, and I always walk away from our chats having learnt something new. Here are some of my key takeaways:

The Amatoles really are special.

*"...I came across this glorious place.
And I first saw the trees!
The Truffula Trees!
The bright-coloured Tufts of the Truffula Trees!"*
(Dr Seuss, 2012: 12)

What makes the Amatoles special is the high diversity of fauna and flora, the various biomes and endemic vegetation found in this densely forested area. It is like no other place and deserves to be conserved and cared for.

An important source of water.

*"From the rippulous pond
came the comfortable sound
of the Humming-Fish humming
while splashing around."* (2012: 15)

The Amatoles are a vital source of water for nearby towns and communities. Grasslands and wetlands are essential in storing water as well as releasing water back into the natural environment, all the while sustaining surrounding communities. Protecting the grasslands and wetlands is of the utmost importance.

Feel-good value

*"And, under the trees, I saw Brown Bar-ba-loots
frisking about in their Bar-ba-loots suits
as they played in the shade and ate Truffula Fruits"* (2012: 14)

Many studies have proven how beneficial it is to one's health and well-being to spend time out in nature. We are, after all, a part of the natural world, not separate from it. Read that sentence again and let it sink in for a bit.

The many challenges.

*"...thanks to your hacking my trees to the ground
there's not enough Truffula Fruit to go 'round...."* (2012: 35)

I could probably write an entire article on this topic alone. Ultimately, the Amatoles face many threats, such as loss of biodiversity, decreasing water retention and soil degradation. Additionally, climate change is putting even more pressure on the natural environment.

It also needs to be emphasised that practices such as commercial monocrop farming, overgrazing and regular fires are the biggest culprits negatively impacting this very special natural environment we call home.

So what can be done to mitigate these challenges?

*"Plant a new Truffula. Treat it with care.
Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air.
Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack."* (2012: 61)

Well, first and foremost, the less humans interfere, the better. Nature is intelligent and resilient and, when given the chance, can restore itself. However, we can support natural processes such as rewilding and restoration by removing alien invasives, ensuring grasslands have time to recuperate, as well as covering areas where the soil is exposed.

Last but not least, get to know the natural environment around you. Observe what happens across all seasons. Get proactive about identifying the natural vegetation that grows here. Join iNaturalist and make contributions to the database. Share information and experiences with others. Get involved in community initiatives and projects.

*"You're in charge of the last Truffula Seeds.
And Truffula Trees are what everyone needs."* (2012: 61)

Coincidentally, when writing this article, I came across a news report about the "last known wild individual of *Dendroseris neriifolia*" on Chile's Robinson Crusoe Island and the scramble to cultivate the last seeds of its kind (Mongabay: Dasgupta S., 2026).

"Unless someone like YOU cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." (2012: 58)

Are we really going to wait until the last "Truffula" tree is cut down, the last river has dried up and the last seed is destroyed before we take action?

*"I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees.
I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues..."* (2012: 23)

Dr Seuss's stories have always contained important allegories emphasising our moral and ethical responsibility to give voice to those that don't have one. To not stand by idly, but rather stand up and confront injustices.

Thank you, Michelle, for doing that for the natural environment of the Amatoles. For the countless and often thankless hours you've spent doing the work on the ground. We wish you well on your new adventure.

What remains on my mind is: who will be the next Lorax of the Amatoles?

- Contributed and Written by Nicole

ECHOES & LEGENDS

HONORARY LOCAL...ZUKO

The Courier Who Became Part of Hogsback

Ask around Hogsback about the local courier driver and chances are you will get a smile, a nod of recognition, or a story about him. After four years of making the same daily journey, he has become a familiar face to many people in the community.

That became particularly obvious this month when he was away for a day. A replacement driver arrived, got lost and then had car trouble. The local WhatsApp groups quickly filled with people asking what had happened to their usual courier.

When he returned the following day, there was genuine relief.

His working day starts in Stutterheim, where he collects the parcels before travelling through Dimbaza, Keiskammahoek and Middledrift, and eventually making the climb to Hogsback. He delivers here every day before heading back out via the Cathcart road.

It is not an easy route.

Over the years he has dealt with difficult weather, poor roads, vehicle problems and days when there is little or no signal on the mountain. Winding Lane is the road he likes least, particularly after heavy rain. It is the only part of his route that makes him nervous, having seen incidents there before.

There was also a particularly serious incident when exhaustion caught up with him while driving. He fell asleep at the wheel, went off the mountain pass and the van rolled. A tree caught the vehicle and prevented it from continuing further down.

Despite that, he returned to the mountain.

What stands out most, however, is that he does not speak about the job with resentment. He genuinely enjoys it. He likes seeing the same people every day, knows many of them by name, and is happy to be doing the work. By the time he gets home he is very tired, but his body has adapted to the demanding roads over the years, and he is still excited to come back the next day.

Among his favourite places to deliver are Tim Jones, Joanne and Mr Benade at the top end, to name but a few. Fortunately, he has also managed to avoid any serious dog incidents.

There is one simple way residents can help. Where properties have long driveways, meeting him at the road saves him time and reduces some of the extra strain on an already long working day. He is particularly grateful to those who already do this.

Tips are not something he generally receives. Occasionally someone buys him a cooldrink, and those small gestures are appreciated.

Four years of daily deliveries have made him more than just the person bringing parcels to the door. He is a familiar face, a dependable presence and, quite simply, someone Hogsback has come to rely on.

Perhaps that deserves a little recognition of its own.

– Interview done, compiled and submitted by field-journo; The Witness



IN THE AIR

Cape Parrot Project

Finding the Forest's Last Parrots: Exploration and the Cape Parrot Project.

Before the Wild Bird Trust could conserve the Cape Parrot, it had to find it. That is easy to forget. The Cape Parrot Project began in 2009 here in Hogsback, when Dr Steve Boyes went looking for a bird that most South Africans had never seen and few scientists had properly counted. South Africa's only endemic parrot survives in scattered patches of Afromontane mistbelt forest across the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. No single population holds more than a few hundred birds. Finding them meant walking into forest that had barely been surveyed. That is the exploration at the heart of this project, and it has never really stopped.

Fieldwork in unmapped forest

Cape Parrots nest in cavities of old dead or dying trees, known as snags – primarily yellowwood trees, which logging has left in short supply. To protect what remains of the habitat of these trees, the team first has to know where it is. Field teams commenced forest monitoring work in 2024 and trek into remote forest patches to see what areas could support Cape Parrots, looking for potentials, recording trees the birds depend on for food and shelter, and checking on forest quality.

Much of this forest has never been mapped in detail. CPP has helped build spatial habitat maps that show where forest quality and breeding potential are highest, and which structural and topographical features matter most to the birds. This is exploration done with GPS units and satellite imagery as much as with binoculars: charting ground that conservation planning has, until now, had to guess at.



Around Hogsback, the species team's field surveys have shown that Cape Parrots range well beyond their mistbelt forest. Once thought to feed almost exclusively on yellowwood kernels, the birds have

been recorded taking fruit and nuts from as many as 36 different tree species, and flying up to 80 kilometres from their home forest to reach them, including pecan orchards on nearby farms. Tracking those movements, and working out what they mean for where the birds need protecting, is its own kind of exploration: following the parrots rather than just the forest.

Since 2022, that same approach has carried the project north, into Limpopo, home to a small and separate population of Cape Parrots that has had far less attention than the birds around Hogsback and the KwaZulu-Natal escarpment. What is already clear is that it means the same job all over again: locating forest patches, identifying nesting and feeding trees, and building an understanding of a population that has, until now, been little studied.



Why this matters beyond the parrot?

None of this is exploration for its own sake. Every survey feeds a very practical goal: knowing enough about the Cape Parrot's habitat to restore it well. Since 2009, that knowledge has guided tree planting and forest restoration around Hogsback, much of it carried out by community members employed to do the work.

This is also where the Cape Parrot Project connects to the wider identity of Wild Bird Trust. The same interest that sent Steve Boyes into the Hogsback forests in 2009 later took Wild Bird Trust into the Okavango, mapping some of the least-known waterways in Africa with the National Geographic Society. Different landscapes, same approach: go and look properly, involve the people who live there, and let what you find shape the conservation that follows.

Still exploring, further afield

That approach has not stood still. The National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project has carried out dozens of expeditions since 2015, from annual crossings of the Delta to treks across the wider river basin, building a scientific baseline for a region that had barely been studied before.

More recently, The Wilderness Project has taken the same method further along the continent's water towers. Under the Great Spine of Africa series, teams have paddled and walked the length of rivers few scientists had ever surveyed source to end, from the Zambezi and the Cassai in Angola to stretches of the Congo and the Nile basin. The ambition is large: to document, in detail, watersheds across roughly 1.2 million square kilometres of largely unprotected African wilderness, working alongside local communities, researchers and governments along the way. Photo: Obakeng Pule – Species Research Assistant – Hogsback out looking for parrots.

Different rivers, different teams, but the same starting point as Hogsback in 2009: you cannot protect what you have not first gone to see.

The Cape Parrot is easy to miss. Its forests are steep, remote, and often overlooked. Wild Bird Trust's exploration work exists to make sure that neither the bird nor its habitat stays unseen.

– Susan Wishart, CPP

IN THE AIR

Hogsback Horror-Scopes

ARIES – July proved you right about the snow, and you’ve been insufferable ever since. August brings the sudden realisation that one successful prediction does not make you a meteorologist. Please stop checking the forecast every six minutes.

TAURUS – You survived the snow beautifully – mostly by staying indoors with food, blankets and a fire. August encourages more of the same. If anyone invites you somewhere, ask first: “Will there be heating?”

GEMINI – You have shown everyone your snow photos approximately 47 times, from 11 different angles. We get it. It snowed. Your August challenge is finding something else to talk about. Good luck.

CANCER – The snow awakened something emotional in you. Suddenly Hogsback feels magical again and you’re considering forgiving everyone. Don’t rush it. Give it until the next power outage.

LEO – You looked magnificent in the snow and have photographic evidence to prove it. Unfortunately, everyone else also looked magnificent in the snow. August demands that you find a new stage. Jazz Festival should provide one.

VIRGO – You’ve spent the past month documenting snowfall, temperatures, road conditions and exactly how many hours the power was off. Your records are immaculate. Your patience is not.

LIBRA – July’s snow restored your faith in Hogsback – briefly. Now you’re trying to decide whether August means Jazz Festival, hibernation or both. Choose both. You can dance in a puffer jacket.

SCORPIO – The snow softened you for approximately eleven minutes. Then somebody posted something stupid on Facebook and you returned to your natural state. August finds you watching quietly from the shadows and knowing far more than you should.

SAGITTARIUS – The snow has convinced you that winter adventure is officially a good idea. It isn’t. You will attempt something ridiculous in freezing conditions and call it “an experience.” At least tell someone where you’re going.

CAPRICORN – You spent July preparing for snow and were annoyingly correct. August rewards you with another list of things that need fixing before the next disaster. You are beginning to suspect that living in Hogsback is just one long unpaid maintenance contract.

AQUARIUS – You predicted the snow, manifested the snow, or at least loudly claimed you did. Nobody can prove otherwise. August brings another visionary idea. Please, for the love of the mountain, finish the previous one first.

PISCES – The snow has confirmed everything you’ve always believed about Hogsback: it is magical, mysterious and slightly unhinged. August finds you wandering through the mist looking for signs from the universe. The universe recommends putting on a jacket.

ON THE GROUND MAMMAL MEMOIRS...

Every Hogsback animal deserves care. It all started with Wayne Kent...

It was said that Hogsback's animals understood Wayne best. This is a testament to the man he was. Upon his passing, his friends suggested using funds from his estate to establish the Wayne Kent Fund, "to help local animals whose owners had nowhere else to turn in times of medical crisis." This was how the Wayne Kent Animal Fund (WKAF) was born.

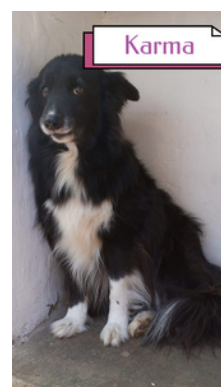
Running the Fund

Since 2023, Billy and Gigi Breytenbach, animal whisperers on the mountain, have managed the Fund, which provides veterinary care for animals whose owners cannot afford it. Dr Karl Hagemann, the veterinarian from East London, deserves special mention for his contributions. He has performed many procedures for the WKAF. He is not only willing but also often charges discounted rates for his services. We also have structured a committee to help run the funds future endeavors; and we want to thank Kate Bowden, Lydene Naylor, and Sarieta Schultz for their willingness to partner with the fund.

Hogsback equals Community

Hogsback's community spirit is legendary. By community spirit, we mean a sense of belonging, a shared Hogsback identity, mutual support within the village, and a commitment to one another's well-being – in this case, our animals' well-being.

It is well known on the mountain that the greater Hogsback community stands together in times of crisis – any crisis. The WKAF therefore belongs to the greater Hogsback community. It is a community project and can only be successful if our community is involved. Examples of our tight-knit community include community members holding a bake sale and raising more than R13 000 in much-needed funds to continue our work. Just the other day, community members rallied to search for Molly, who had been caught in a snare. It was reported that she is at home and safe.



The value of your support and contributions.

Each animal passing through our village always leaves pawprints behind. However noble, money is always the determining factor. This is no different for the WKAF. We rely on donations, pledges, and contributions. We are immensely grateful for every financial contribution we have received (and continue to receive) over the past 3 years. Our new plans will not only ensure a sustainable income for the Fund but also allow the community to care for Hogsback's animals through their time and skills. More about this existing development later.

This is What We Do:

We provide emergency medical treatment and surgery for animals in life-threatening situations. To limit unwanted animals and to make sure that our animals live long and healthy lives, we sterilise animals.

We run preventive animal care regimes, including vaccinations, deworming and flea and tick treatment. Wellness exams

Education is Key. We will show you how best to care for your animals and what to do in an emergency. All of these plans and activities will guarantee that we can continue to say, "Every Hogsback animal deserves care," for many years to come.

It is a privilege to honour Wayne, together with Emmy, Karma, Junior, and Bahlue, in this way and to keep our animals healthy.

– Contributed by Sarieta Schultz

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOPS

As I sit in a cabin behind Mnyameni peak aka Hog 3, watching the fireflies dance on the hillside in the dark Misty night (the same cabin where Tom my Canadian friend asked me for herbal recommendations for an upset tummy and he didn't know why he had an upset tummy, maybe the eggs perhaps, who knows lol)

Seeing fireflies always takes me back to my childhood, and some of the things I would do for fun, or to get away from the world's thoughts, was either cycle out of town or hike all around the area, always wanting to climb the only mountain in close proximity, the Tarka mountain, a mountain very similar to our Hog 1 (yes I stayed in Tarkastad for a big chunk of my adolescent years)

I have gone to the top of the mountain a few times with school and church groups, but never alone, till one day...

In my last year of high-school, I decided to take a hike and conquer the mountain, but in my true young heart, I knew it had to be done my way, from the front up, as I loved wall climbing and rock climbing, but I didn't have any equipment (a bad workman blames his tools, I didn't have any, so I couldn't blame them anyway, win win chicken din)

So off I went with a trumpeting trump, and I walked straight up to the foot of the mountain, which was an old abandoned railway station. I looked the mountain dead in the face and decided to hike straight up to the top where the cliff face meets the hill (a 50m cliff)

With my knees still as fresh I walked, up up and away!!! With lungs burning more and more, the closer I get, my determination growing with each step.

Once at the bottom of the very intimidating cliff face (I swear it looked sooo much smaller and easier when I contemplated doing it from my hostel window) I started looking for the easiest option to the top, with only a slight option to the left, so I decided to go left... up and up and up, one step, one hand, just breathe, up and up, a little to the right, And a little to the left. Don't look down yet, but I want to! Oh wow I'm high up already! Focus Adi, focus!

Who knew the wind would blow on top of the mountain, not me, not like the wind didn't blow every time I went to the top of the mountain...

As I adjusted my hands the wind started playing with me, pulling me away from the cliff! Not my kinda game, I thought while hanging on with one hand, so I made my way to a little sheltered Ridge a little to the right... much better!

Making my way up along the corners of the Ridge seemed like a good way to make great ground, so up I went, clinging and pushing, till the next moment when a rock came whizzing past the left of me, oh no could it be a rock fall??!! Another one, this time to the right of me! I look up, and there they are, baboons!!! Throwing rocks and sticks at me, I thought! I am way to far up, to go back down, so I decide to make my way right and try to move as far away from them as possible without being killed! As I moved up and right, I noticed that I had come across a baboon "nest" on one of the ridges! Heart pounding, I made my way up and away from them, to the top!

Once I made it up to the top and most of the metallic taste of adrenaline had subsided, I sat in pure awe of what I had achieved, and the views that laid before me! I then decided to head back as selfies on top of the mountains was yet to be invented, and my old NEC brick of a cellular phone had no idea it's great grandkids would one day have built in cameras! So I decided to make my way back down. I decided to rather take the side route down and avoid any more baboon conflict!

That feeling of being on top of a mountain has never left me, and it's the closest feeling to flying I have felt without my wings!

Till next time folks

Adi Forestbeing



By Community. For Community. On Community.

VOICES, VENTS & VISION

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THE MOUNTAIN IS HARD ENOUGH

The Mountain Is Hard Enough...a call for Compassion

We know how to come together when someone's life is at stake. When there is a fire, a medical emergency or someone in immediate danger, people move. They arrive. They help.

Why, then, do we sometimes struggle so badly to live alongside one another when there is no emergency? Hogsback is a beautiful mountain, but beauty does not make life easy. The weather can be harsh. We are remote. Doctors, shops and many everyday conveniences are far away. Some live without basic amenities.

Others may have everything they need materially, yet still carry enormous emotional and mental burdens. People stay for different reasons. Some love this place. Some call it home. Some have nowhere else to go.

And as a community, we have survived a great deal.

Perhaps that is why consideration matters so much here.

Because conflict has become part of everyday life. Old grievances, suspicion, gossip, assumptions, alliances and personal battles have fractured relationships and destroyed trust. People have been hurt. People have walked away. Some wounds have lasted far longer than the arguments that created them.

And there is another uncomfortable truth. Sometimes even our good deeds can become a stage, an opportunity to be seen, praised or positioned in a certain light. That does not erase the help that was given, but it should make us question what truly motivates us.

Consideration asks something deeper.

It asks us to think before we speak, judge or react. To remember that we rarely know what another person is carrying. To understand that disagreement does not require cruelty, and accountability does not require humiliation.

There have been times when the consequences of how people are treated here have gone far beyond an argument. People have become deeply isolated and profoundly hurt. We cannot know what someone is carrying, or how much they have already endured before they cross our path.

That should make us stop.

We don't have to like everyone. We don't have to agree. We don't have to tolerate harmful behaviour.

But do we really need to make another person's life harder when we could choose not to?

When an emergency happens, we seem to remember that beneath our differences, we are human beings.

Perhaps consideration is simply remembering that before the emergency arrives.

Because the mountain is already hard enough.

The weather is hard enough. The isolation is hard enough. Financial hardship is hard enough. Life itself is hard enough.

We should not become another hardship our neighbours have to survive.

Perhaps before we ask what is wrong with this community, we should each ask a harder question:

What am I adding to it?

Every word matters. Every choice matters. Every act of kindness matters. So does every act of cruelty.

The magic of this mountain will not be protected by its forests alone.

It will be protected when its people remember how to care for one another.

by Seeker of Magic

The Hogsback ~~Community~~ Whines

HOGWATCH; NEIGHBOUR HELPING PAYING NEIGHBOURS ONLY.

HOGSBACK'S LATEST ADMINISTRATIVE MARVEL: MONETIZING THE CONSTITUTION

In a masterclass of free-market innovation, Hogsback Community Policing Forum (CPF) Chairperson Mark Andersen has successfully resolved the age-old dilemma of public service versus private profit by simply combining them into a single, self-regulating monopoly.

The "Schrödinger's Guard" Doctrine

Following the exit of security firm Smhart, CPF leadership pulled off a breathtaking administrative maneuver: reactivating the Hogsback Security Association (HSA) to run "HogWatch" – a subscription-based patrol charging residents between R400 and R1,000 monthly.

To navigate the pesky inconvenience of constitutional oversight, leadership pioneered the Schrödinger's Guard precedent:

When Collecting Debit Orders – HogWatch is an independent, hyper-efficient private entity that owes no accountability to the CPF. Per the Chair to this blog: "Our paperwork is enough to satisfy the bank so that is good enough for us."

When Gathering Intel – HogWatch is magically intertwined with statutory CPF leadership, granting its private operators seamless access to official SAPS case intelligence. Per their own memo, the guard "Will carry a taser and knobkierrie."

When Liability Arises – Clause 1.5 activates an impenetrable shield, forcing paying subscribers to indemnify the committee from all legal risk while that guard roams public roads without a signed SAPS MoU.

Constitutional Rules Are for the Unsubscribed

Clauses 6.4.3 and 6.4.4 of the CPF Constitution say Exco must approve all safety structures and enforce strict accountability. However, as Exco Chair Mark Andersen sits across the table from HSA Chair Mark Andersen, oversight has become remarkably efficient, always ending in unanimous, self-congratulatory approval. Minutes taken by HSA Secretary Vincent Shaw, across from CPF Deputy Chair Vincent Shaw. By placing village safety behind a paywall, public intelligence feeds into a monetized network. Paying subscribers receive patrols and priority WhatsApp alerts. Non-subscribers – affectionately viewed by leadership as "skinflints" – are left to rely on SAPS.

A Perfectly Closed Loop

Through this dual-hatted structure, leadership has achieved the ultimate civic masterstroke: total control over both the problem (crime reporting via the statutory CPF) and the monetized solution (HogWatch). So while ungrateful locals foolishly ask whether HogWatch is an unregistered private watchman service or a constitutionally bound neighbourhood watch, municipal scholars can only marvel at the sheer genius of it all. Why bother with statutory oversight when you can monetize the precinct, indemnify yourself, and charge the public for the privilege of being called skinflints when they don't pay?

VOICES, VENTS & VISION

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SILENT PREDATORS: THE SNARE CRISIS IN HOGSBACK

Most Hogsback locals have a scary snare story... or know someone who does. From the brutally fatal all the way to; "that was close!"... these stories, especially in 'Dogsback' are ripping holes in our relationship with nature itself.

Not too long ago, before we had to bushwack through non secure, non-permit-restricted areas... we walked our dogs in safer spaces... in recent weeks, the amount of snares found on private property, points to the reality that... even our own back yards are no longer safe.

While historically set for bushmeat (inyama yomoya) or localized crop protection against wild pigs and porcupines, modern wire snaring bears no resemblance to traditional, regulated hunting (Ukuzingela). Traditional leaders and elders recognize unmonitored wire snares for what they are... non-selective, highly destructive poaching.

The Legal Reality:

Under South African law:

- Animals Protection Act (Act 71 of 1962): Inflicting unnecessary suffering on domestic or wild animals carries severe criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment.
- Provincial Nature Conservation Legislation: Wire snares are explicitly banned as a hunting method under Eastern Cape environmental regulations and the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA).
- Criminal Offenses: Placing traps on private or communal property without explicit authorization constitutes trespassing, illegal hunting, and property damage.
-

Safe Deactivation and Removal:

- Inspect the Immediate Area: Scan for secondary traps or ground triggers before stepping into the brush.
- Neutralize the Anchor: Cut the loop with heavy-duty wire cutters or unwind the anchor wire directly from the post or tree.
- Extract the Material: Remove all wire from the area entirely; disabling a snare on-site leaves raw materials for poachers to rebuild immediately.
- Document and Log: Record exact GPS coordinates, date, time, and photographic evidence before disturbance.

VOICES, VENTS & VISION

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SILENT PREDATORS: THE SNARE CRISIS IN HOGSBACK...CONTINUED

Community member's plea

"Please make it known to the community that this action is absolutely not acceptable. On Sat night, early hours of Sun, a dog was caught in a snare. And it's barking and howling went on for hours.. Keeping many awake and upset, till a group of volunteers found the dog in a snare.. Still alive at 0300am. This is the most cruel way of trying to catch buck even but most of all pet dogs are getting into them. This is an illegal action.. And not allowed. Besides the fact that people are trespassing on private property.. Other residents have also found snares recently... And are terribly upset. Dogs have been found with snares around them too.. I'm asking that people stop this setting of snares, please."

– Lynden Wittstock

Snares are usually placed across paths that animals already use, with the wire loop positioned at about head or body height. Sometimes brushwood is used around the sides to narrow the animal's route and guide it towards the loop. They can turn up along established game trails, forest edges, routes to water, gaps in fences and increasingly... on private property. Which is where this becomes particularly alarming for this community and our dogs.

What can WE do:

Well, firstly, stop assuming that somebody else will deal with it. Follow the Safe Deactivation and Removal steps above. (And look after your animals guys! Walk them so they don't need to go walk themselves. Fix your fences, check them regularly.)

And report, report report. You don't need to know who put the snare there, in order for you to report it. You don't need a name, an address or a confession. You can report what you actually know (there is a snare here; this is where it is; this is what I found).

If you have information about who may be responsible, pass that information on, yes, pass it on, but please don't turn suspicion into accusation. Let the authorities investigate.

Report every incident, I cannot say this enough. One snare might be dismissed as an isolated incident. Ten reports showing the same pattern, in the same area, over time, are much harder to ignore. Keep your reference numbers. Take photographs. Share information responsibly. If your dog has been caught, injured or killed, report that too.

Maybe (and I can hardly believe I am saying this), but maybe we need a task team, a group that collects all this data in one spot. Who tackles area by area, snare clearing days etc. And perhaps we need to start asking a slightly bigger question.

If snares have been a problem here for years, how much information have we actually collected about them? Where are they being found? How often? What are they catching? And what happens after we report them?

How many incidents have been formally reported? ... According to Col. Masiwa, Hogsback SAPS; confirmed no snare related dockets opened or reported in the last 12 months. We absolutely need to start reporting these incidents to SAPS, nothing changes if we don't start there.

This isn't about starting a witch hunt. It's about making the problem visible enough that somebody has to deal with it.

VOICES, VENTS & VISION

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SERVICE AIN'T SERVING

Welcome to Hogsback, please lower your expectations.

Hogsback hospitality is now becoming a little like snow and fairies: equally elusive and very, very rare. With one rather important difference...No matter how improbable... the snow and the fairies call the guests back; our service (or lack thereof), will only be excused for so long...then what?

And that should worry us...because when hospitality becomes this inhospitable, I really hope our restaurateurs, shop owners and tourism operators realise that saying things like: "That's just how things are here." / "You're in Hogsback now." / or: "We're not McDonald's." is not actually a pro-tourism strategy.

Nobody is asking Hogsback to become McDonald's. Nobody wants Hogsback to become a sterile, franchised, homogenised little tourism machine where everything is available in exactly the same size, shape and shade of beige. Quite the contrary.

People come here for something else. WE came here for something else! But there is a rather large difference between authentic and inconsiderate...between being quirky and being careless...between having your own way of doing things and making a paying guest feel like an inconvenience for having arrived at all. In an attempt to not mention my sources, I went hunting for some publicly placed reviews... As far back as 2013; the handful of 'bad' reviews, are about our roads, state of some buildings and accommodation...BUT; apart from 1 'pushy' info center lady, there are no complaints about staff or hosts or service. Quite the contrary.

"We spent 4 days in Hogsback, amazing hikes, waterfalls and views. Our cottage was freezing and didn't have a fireplace. The restaurant roof was leaking and the food was average... but the PEOPLE were amazing! Staff helpful, friendly and you can see they love working there. We already booked our next holiday, even chose the same cottage! See you when we're back! "

What we lacked in infrastructure, luxury and comfort, we made up in heart, spirit and service! What happened? ...Complacency? Disillusioned? Tired? Stressed? Forgot what a privilege it is to live here?

Hogsback has clearly never been universally described as a perfectly maintained little mountain paradise. But when it came to the people, the staff, the hosts and the service; the overwhelming impression was actually superlative.

How you run your business, your opening hours, your pricing, how you treat your staff or service your customers; technically, has nothing to do with me. I hardly go anywhere, so I claim no rights... Why does it matter to me if you want to chase away customers? ... It's your livelihood/your sideline/ your hobby, your time, your name. But bear in mind; we are a micro-town, and this ain't the big city.

There, your competitor down the road, closing down means more business for you...Here, it leaves a wide dark open space. That void becomes a vortex... sucking in the good vibes left in its surrounds. It breeds something different. Guests want choices, different options to match their different outlooks and needs. Their ability to choose matters to me, the quality of their interactions and their experience here matters to me...

Because the gift they give us, (if we take a moment to receive it); deserves a Thank You, they can feel!

By Community. For Community. On Community.

GOSSIP & DRAMA

Speedy Snippets

- Think Brangelina, KimYe & DraLo... Hogsback has it's own power couple... **RoGinia!** We have been unable to confirm the connection's status, please keep teasing them until they confess.
- Three local husbands declared Clive Morcom as a 'Braaibroodjie-'Champion. (They will be in witness protection this week).
- One divorce is final, another in progress
- Liza is having a baby that has nothing to do with Rory.
- King's Lodge Pizza's seems fixed!
- The dysfunctional ice-cream machine, found it's groove and have been working consistently. We can confirm it's clearly not a McDonald's/KFC ice-cream machine.

For Local Residents Only

August 2028

The Hogsback Times



At least SOME of you Noticed this one;



... & I wish Nobody Noticed;



I definitely didn't notice this mirror flip oversight.

Humans make mistakes...
So does
A.I



The danger lies; in believing either, is, infallible...

Don't believe me? Go look at your downloaded JIBI past-pdf

And just like that, August starts it's walk into the archives. As we step into September, may your days grow a little lighter, your tea stay a little warmer, and your spirit stretch into whatever space it needs. Take the time to move your body, listen to the quiet places, and build stories worth repeating around a fire. Be generous with your kindness, soft with your edges, loving with the people who make your world feel like home and fiercely loving, to those who don't.