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R2

Students protest proposed national media laws

Benjamin Katz

Rhodes students have officially joined the likes of Western Cape Premier Helen Zille, Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale, and author and academic Mamphela Ramphele, all of whom have spoken out against government's proposed new media laws.

About 40 students attended a protest outside the Grahamstown Police Station on 11 August to oppose the proposed laws that many fear will restrict media freedom and impose upon freedom of speech.

Students arrived on Beaufort Street around midday to show their support, some bringing djembe drums and others carrying traditional placards reading 'We want the truth, not the edit'.

Honours student Aidan Prinsloo, who led the protest, addressed the crowd. He began with a reference to Mzilikazi wa Afrika, the Sunday Times journalist who was recently arrested stating, "It wasn't in accordance with how things should be done (according to the law)."

"The [government's proposed] laws are relevant to both journalism and art, the restriction of freedom of speech," Prinsloo said.

The controversy is with regards to two laws that government is planning to pass through parliament:

- The proposal of a government-run media appeals tribunal (MAT) in place of the current Press Ombudsman and Appeals Panel (orchestrated by the Press Council) which have both media workers and public figures on their boards.

- The Protection of Information Bill which will allow for information to be easily classified, and, under initial drafts, warrants a 25-year prison sentence to any journalist who exposes such information.

Douglas de Jager, a law student acting as a marshal at the protest said,

"We need a free media to keep the government in check. We need to do something about this direct attack on the media and the constitution."

The laws have sprouted massive controversy around South Africa with prominent figures and organisations publicly condemning the laws including Zille and the DA, Cope, Sexwale, Mamphela and the International Press Institute (IPI).

Editors and former editors of student publications have stated their "solidarity" with the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) in signing the Auckland Park Declaration which reads, "We appeal to the South African government and the ruling ANC to abide by the founding principles of our democracy, and to abandon these proposed measures."

Prinsloo told students outside the police station that the only ones talking about the proposed laws are those involved in the media. "We need to encourage people to have their say and spread the word. Only talk about rights and freedom of speech can preserve them," he said.

He told protestors to use Facebook and other social media and warned, "Don't underestimate the power of social media for social change."

Josh Rorke, one of the protestors and a first-year BA student commented, "Freedom of speech is the first thing to go in a fascist dictatorship. One wonders how much of a democracy we are with a one-party state, shoot-to-kill police laws and, if this bill is passed, a restricted media."

Prinsloo handed out a petition, which was still being signed around campus at the time of going to print, calling for the South African Police Service to a) conduct a thorough investigation into the arrest of journalist wa Afrika, and b) assure the public that the police will abstain from intimidatory tactics against journalists.



Students gather outside the police department to protest the implementation of media restrictions which will severely limit the free flow of information in the media.

The petition will be sent to the South African Police Service National Commissioner.

Editor of The Oppidan Press, Lauren Minnie, wrote in a statement, "I take pride in the fact that a group of strong,

revolutionary individuals fought for equality and democracy, and as a journalist I strive to maintain this through freedom of expression and ethical standards."

"Media freedom and freedom of ex-

pression is something that all journalists, whether aspiring or practicing, should stand up for as our right, and the right of all South Africans," she said.

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News

SRC’s affair with Eric Ofei



Tsholofelo Thhooale

The term is nearing an end for Eric Ofei, the 2010 SRC president. “The experience was an amazing one, better than I thought it would be and much more work,” he said.

He had the vital role of supervising every councillor’s portfolio, ensuring the team is on track and thinking of new strategies to deal with student issues.

Ofei’s goal was to strengthen the relationship between the SRC and the university, as well as mending the communication bridges between the SRC and students. He feels this was achieved through the release of the Purple Press for the first time in four years and the revamping of the website for the first time in three years.

During his campaign he said he wanted to make this year about the students. The SRC attended society functions, visited the various dining halls and used an email system to gauge the needs of students. “It is important that you find out what the students want before you can implement plans that are to address their needs,” Ofei said.

Nombuso Nzama, a first-year BSc student said, “Eric has not done anything so far. He wanted us to strike in order to get the end-of-year examination rewrites free because there was no SWOT week, but he has not acted on that since and the plan has not materialised. We are still waiting.”

Ofei said he had various challenges to best. “The constitution of the SRC does not allow for much flexibility because it does not allow for effective disciplinary measures for a councillor who is not pulling their weight,” he said. The academic representative councillor [Egmont Bouwer] was one of the major challenges for the body. “He did not attend any meetings including those that were specific to his portfolio; he only went to one of 30-something.”

Ofei said he had little control over the situation despite efforts to gather students during meetings to notify them of the flaws of their elected leader and possibly get him outvoted.

“He does not deserve to be on the body because he does not care about the SRC; he is just in it to build his political portfolio. He is running for president for the next year and I don’t think he should,” Ofei said. At the time of going to print, Bouwer could not be reached for comment, despite attempts by The Oppidan Press to organise a meeting with him.

The outgoing president said, “I want people to believe that I made an impact during my term in office, however small or big the impact and being a gracious person who didn’t just care about himself.”

Equipping Leaders for the long run

Relebhone Myambo

Starting off in the SRC as a Vice-President External is an unusual move, but to George Kahn it was a welcome challenge.

During his term in office, Kahn made a decision to be a team player and encourage his colleagues, “assisting them and developing them as better leaders”. He has spent the last nine years of his life concentrating on his studies, with over six majors and twelve minors under his belt.

This year he has had big plans for himself. “I am graduating again but this time I am going to work – I have things to do to make sure I leave this world a better place than the way I found it.”

Kahn found his experience as Vice-President External so fulfilling that he wishes he had run for the position earlier. Although he did not get to do all he envisioned for the Rhodes student body, he still managed to do many things for the school. This included making sure that Rhodes was taken seriously this year at the South African Union of Students, O-Week ran well, the disciplinary system was reviewed and revised to include a Human Rights Commission model, and that the number of security guards be increased to insure greater



safety for students on campus.

In pursuit of more comfort and more non-alcohol entertainment choices for students, Kahn and the SRC also made sure that a new coffeehouse will be built beneath the new library and will be open to them 24/7. Kahn says that it will also serve as a study assistance centre, and that it will be a “24 hour alternative to the Rat and Friar’s”.

Kahn was part of the efforts to save intervarsity from extinction, and believes that any Rhodent who jeopardises its future is not a true Rhodent.

Even though he is in his last year of law studies, he still recommends running for a position within the SRC very highly. “Just take a risk,” he advises. “You won’t regret it in the long run.”



Garth: SRC must choose its battles

Khangelani Dziba

After two years in the SRC, Garth Elzerman, Vice-President Internal, will finally be laying down his tools. As Vice-President he performed his duty in the creation and implementation of SRC policy and the overall managing and supervision of SRC structures. Due to the nature of his portfolio, he has remained behind the scenes and might not be a familiar face to new students.

Despite being known for his no-nonsense attitude, he has had his fair share of challenges. “I have had to deal with issues which did not relate directly to my own portfolio, which took up a great deal of my time and energy,” he said, “ultimately detracting from the things I wanted to do.”

“The one clear highlight of working on the SRC this year has been the team. This year’s SRC was a strong and effective team,” said Elzerman.

On improving some of the aspects of his portfolio he said, “The SRC needs

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In control of the SRC’s bread and Bata

Benjamin Katz

Junior Bata, the current SRC Treasurer, works with an annual budget of just under R1 million.

Bata states that this money has gone primarily to student funding requests such as bringing guest speakers to the university, assistance for a number of students to travel abroad, the refurbishment of the SRC offices and O-Week.

“Orientation Week, as always, is a big spending pot. [It] is always a point of departure for the term of Treasurer. The frantic nature of this period and multiple event layout leads to one losing track of the exact nature of expenditure. Thus, it becomes difficult to remain within budget,” Bata explained.



Despite a tendency for the Treasurer to exceed budget during O-Week, Bata lists “keeping track of the budget, budget committee negotiations for student tuition increments [and] availability to hear student funding requests” as some of the successes he has had during his tenure.

Currently, there is still discussion over the implementation of a proposed SRC initiative to supply a bus service for students living in digs. Bata, addressing this issue stated, “The Oppidan bus saga is still unresolved and is therefore draining more of the institution’s resources.”

He added, “This situation is unsustainable and will need to be assessed and taken up with the university authorities.”

Nicholas Mulgrew, an executive member of the Live Music Society (LMS), one of the biggest societies on campus said, “Sometimes, when societies like LMS require large amounts of money for equipment repairs or the like, the SRC has been quite reluctant to release the money that our members have entrusted to us.”

Bata has decided to stand down and not run for SRC elections this year, however he has been offered various other offers to take up youth leadership positions outside of Grahamstown as well as outside of the country.

He recommends that anyone interested in running for Treasurer should talk to him. Bata said, “The job of Treasurer is a very specialised and technical one, and a fair amount of financial literacy is needed.”

International Affairs Councillor: Nchimunya ‘Chipo’ Hamukoma

Precious Mncwango

“SRC is amazing with sacrifice”, said the 2010 International Affairs Councillor, Nchimunya Hamukoma, known by most as ‘Chipo’.

“My position has a lot to do with making Rhodes University more global”, said Hamukoma who thinks students need to be more aware of the fact that there is more beyond Rhodes, Grahamstown or even South Africa.

In her position Hamukoma managed to raise funds for the devastating Haiti incident and brought an income of about R2000 by selling fast-food and cool drinks during O-Week. This income in turn went towards Gift of the Givers which is a charity organisation in Haiti.

“I also organised international day and we also organised Africa Week”, said Hamukoma.

“My highlight for this year was the Africa Day celebration, and the panel discussion with Trevor Manuel. It was an amazing opportunity to be given and also a worthy experience,” she said.

At the panel discussion, Hamukoma impressed the audience and visiting former presidents, Dr Kaunda of Zambia, and Mr Chissano from Mozambique, with her address in which she highlighted the struggles of women and the social responsibilities of the privileged. Her words were greeted with massive



applause and emphatic nodding from Manuel and the panel.

Hamukoma told The Oppidan Press of the terrific year she’s had and the different kinds of things she was exposed to via the SRC. However, Hamukoma said she specifically regrets not being able “to create a buddy system between Rhodes students and the exchange students”.

She said she hopes to have encouraged people to be part of the SRC because “it is a wonderful experience”.

Environmental Councillor: David Knowles



Precious Mncwango

Fulfilling the role of Environmental Councillor, as well as being Chairperson of GRASS, has kept Knowles moving at a whirlwind pace this year. Knowles and his team, along with Dr Roman Tandlich, are still currently planning to get a water testing project off the ground despite the looming end of his tenure as SRC Councillor.

Knowles added, “There is a network of community gardens which students can assist in, and GRASS is starting a campus stream-cleaning programme which can be replicated by residences.”

Plans for the year were very ambitious, but unfortunately some of the initiatives Knowles had planned to do did not quite turn out as he’d expected. “Initially, I’d intended to get gardens going in residences, work with the Grahamstown Feral Cat Project to deal with the problem of strays on campus, facilitate trips to community gardens, run activism programs and [conduct] water quality testing drives.. I planned to don a cape and fly through the skies,” he said.

But this year has been trial and error for Knowles as he admits that his role has not been easy and time has not been on his side, “There was no structure for this position when I arrived, it was very much just up to me to see what needed to be done and then do it.”

The year for Knowles has been a challenge but he is proud knowing that when the next councillor takes his/her position much of the ground work will already be done making it easier to initiate projects relating to the environment.

Knowles emphasized the importance of the Environment portfolio and described how it will surely grow and become more structured and stable in due time.

He explained that often the society would have to contact the Dean of Students, Dr Vivian De Klerk, to get involved. Mulgrew said one of the problems is that LMS cannot predict when they will need money to repair equipment and pay bands, hence he finds the SRC’s monetary system to be restricting.

Mulgrew added, “That said, the SRC has never mismanaged our funds, but I think that should be a given in any circumstance.”

Bata has decided to stand down and not run for SRC elections this year, however he has been offered various other offers to take up youth leadership positions outside of Grahamstown as well as outside of the country.

He recommends that anyone interested in running for Treasurer should talk to him. Bata said, “The job of Treasurer is a very specialised and technical one, and a fair amount of financial literacy is needed.”

Oppi Councillor struggled with lack of interaction

Benjamin Katz

As SRC’s Oppidan Councillor, Hasan Randeree’s responsibilities centered on bettering the lives of Oppidans at Rhodes.

“The focus this year was on improving Oppi life and pushing forward an agenda focused on making university life a more pleasant experience for Oppies, such as the Oppi bus and Oppi events,” Randeree said.

Amongst the initiatives Randeree took on as head of the Oppidan portfolio on the SRC, the Oppi committee also managed to organise several workshops, including the latest on digs leasing, as well as the digs Olympics.

Although, despite these initiatives, Randeree stated he thinks he hasn’t achieved as much as he possibly could have, but was quick to add, “On the other hand, it’s a two-way thing. We need Oppies to be more interactive and enthusiastic about Oppi affairs.”

Randeree continued to say he would have liked to have seen more student interaction. “Student interaction is something that greatly lacked this year. I feel that Oppidans need to engage more with whoever comes into the position (Oppidan Councilor) next year in order to have an Oppi community,” he said.

He said however, that this year his team successfully managed to help integrate first-time Oppidans into the Oppi family early in the year. “During O-Week actually, and serenades was another huge success this year as well.”

Still coming up in the run-up to the 2010/2011 SRC’s induction is a planned



comedy evening for Oppidans, as well as a ball. “We have an Oppi ball coming up soon and I think it is an ideal opportunity to build bridges that can assist in our progress,” said Randeree, referring to his frustrations regarding Oppi integration.

Talking of his highlights, Randeree stated, “The most important thing was having an awesome team of councilors to work alongside with and a great committee as well.”

Randeree said he wanted to tell students who feel the SRC hasn’t been active enough to run for elections themselves, “Stand up for these elections, take up leadership positions and make the changes you would like to see.”

Andre has had an “Ace” year

Khangelani Dziba

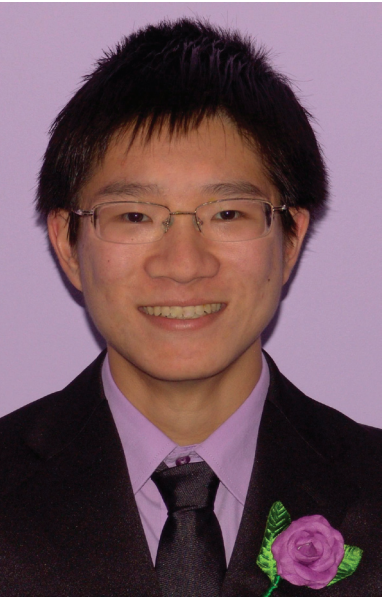
Despite starting off as a first-year student and having to battle against third year opposition to obtain the title of Societies Councillor, second year BComm student Andre Ah Chow proved that nothing is impossible. His main responsibilities were to assume the role of administrator and liaison officer between societies, the university, and any other external parties. He was also tasked the responsibility of viewing proposals for societies and also recommend them to the SRC should they be of value.

Some of the successes he has had have been organising the sports and societies extravaganza during O-Week and a successful sign-up week where students got the chance to find out more about various clubs and sign up to them. He said there were however, like any other years, “financial difficulties that had to be overcome”.

He highlighted that amidst all those challenges there were some perks to be remembered in his term of office such as the responsibility of helping first year students through the transition they had to go through when they got to university.

“The societies really have functioned well on an independent basis without really having to go to the top management,” said Chayse Kriel, a first-year BSocSci student.

“Clubs like the hip-hop society and



SHARC were a bit of a problem for us because we are members but we never hear of where meetings are held and that is just not cool,” said Thamsanqa Mashasha, an honours student. “All they know how to do is inform us where and when parties are going to be held,” said first-year BJourn student Kwasa Zwelibandzi.

“Be as diplomatic as much as possible you are there to serve the societies and to help the university,” said Ah Chow when offering advice to his successor. In order for a person to grow he said they had to be “diverse and learn through experience” and as such would not be applying for any further posts for the SRC next year.

“I would like to be remembered as a miracle worker through hard times but still have been able to produce results,” he said.

SRC Community engagement councillor: Cameron Stewart

By Relebhone Myambo

Known to be the most prone to doing crazy stunts, Cameron Stewart describes himself as the “most insane member of the SRC” because of his insane laugh and his ability to find the humorous side to most things in life.

His main duties as Community Engagement Councilor have involved being the mediator of messages between Rhodes students and the community engagement offices. He has also acted as an advisor on projects, giving guidelines and advice on how to make them better and providing transport and support for community engagement participants.



Stewart’s biggest initiative was organising the Community Engagement week in March - single-handedly. A sports ‘fun-day’ for the local high schools formed a part of the activities, alongside presentations held in the evenings by various societies and organisations such as Habitat for Humanity.

Especially rewarding for Stewart was “collaborating with Galela Amanzi, an organisation that provides water tanks to schools in Grahamstown so that they are able to grow their own plantation gardens, and Rotaract”.

One of Stewart’s highlights was the O-Week community engagement branch, where he was able to introduce himself and the SRC to the first years. Stewart said, “There was great feedback and a raised awareness from those who were involved, which was very gratifying.”

Mbali Baduza, a second year BA Law student has been pleased with Stewart’s performance over the year. “I know he was involved in much of the admin work, going to conferences around the

country that focused on strategies to combat poverty. I know he works really hard and is a good representative for Rhodes,” she said.

While Stewart said he would have liked to delegate more during his term to allow others the chance to also engage in the experience of being a part of community engagement, he is satisfied with the achievements he has made during his term in office.

He believes that he has worked with people who are experts in their portfolios and are driven to succeed in them.

“I am taking a gap from the SRC and will not be re-applying to be a part of the body. I enjoyed the experience so much that I would not want to ruin it but to rather sustain it as a memory. I want to hand the torch over to someone who is capable to do the job, possibly even better than myself,” he said.

SRC 2010 connects with Rhodents

Relebhone Myambo

An organisation is nothing without visibility. If it is not seen and noted, not only will people be unaware of its existence, but they will not be able to seek its assistance should they need help. This is where Lerusha Reddy, the SRC Media Councillor for 2009/2010, came in.

Reddy, a Journalism and Media Studies student, strived for excellence in her year as media councillor, and has to a large extent achieved it. Her accomplishments have included the return of the SRC newsletter, a successful O-Week, and SRC posters notifying the student body of SRC events. Reddy listed her achievements as “the return of the Purple Press, an updated SRC website, and a SRC Twitter account (@RhodesSRC)”. Reddy says she does not have a specific achievement she holds above the rest. “I found every day quite fulfilling and enriching,” she said, counting this as her greatest achievement.

As a student juggling her academic workload and SRC responsibilities, the year had its share of hardships. “I feel I could have delegated more instead of just doing everything myself. More hands make a lighter load,” Reddy said. She cites the drop in her marks as one of the hardships. Despite this she managed to do her part for the image



of the SRC at Rhodes University, and as a proud Rhodent is willing to continue contributing to Rhodes University and the SRC when her term comes to an end.

“They managed to do one or two things,” said Ezekiel Majola, second year BSocSci student of the visibility of the SRC media portfolio. “Before, there was no Purple Press,” he added.

Reddy names transparency and communication as important for the incoming Media Councillor of the SRC. “Students want to know what their SRC is doing for them, so make sure you get the message across and vice versa.”

News

Politics

Mantashe shares his views on the ANC



Many opinions were aired at Rhodes University when the Progressive Youth Alliance held a discussion entitled “What is the ANC doing?“. Amongst the speakers was Gwede Mantashe, the Secretary-General of the ANC and current chairperson of the South African Communist Party.

Sarita Pillay

The Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) hosted a discussion at Rhodes University on August 12, titled “What is the ANC doing?”. The discussion was headed by Secretary-General of the ANC and current chairperson of the South African Communist Party, Gwede Mantashe. Also contributing to the discussion was SASCO president Mbulelo Mandlana.

In opening the discussion of what

the ANC is doing, Mandlana chose to focus critically on the shortfalls of the party, specifically with regards to higher education. Slamming the transformation policy of the ANC in higher education, Mandlana said it “remain(s) only theory and never practise”, Mandlana sighted the enduring divisions between institutions that were previously disadvantaged and those that were white. According to him, these divisions and defined racial profiles of universities continue to exist

because the ANC continues to allow the autonomy of higher education institutions. Outspoken and critical, Mandlana affirmed that it all boiled down to a “conservative intelligentsia” winning the ideological battles within the party. Keynote speaker Gwede Mantashe focussed his assessment of what the ANC has done by first outlining what it is the ANC wants to do. The objectives of the ANC, according to Mantashe, are based on addressing the problem of “interrelated, antagonistic contradictions”

of race, class, and patriarchal power relations. In stressing the importance of race, Mantashe said that a non-racial society could only be created once everybody was equal. If this equality was not achieved, South Africa would be a mere conglomeration of people lacking unity, “It won’t be a rainbow nation, [but] it will be a zebra nation,” Mantashe said to rapturous laughter. In outlining what the ANC is doing, Mantashe made reference to the objectives in the Freedom Charter which the

ANC has achieved and is in the process of achieving. These included giving people access to the mineral wealth of the country, which he believed has been facilitated through the passing of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act of 2002. According to Mantashe, the state is now the owner of mineral deposits on behalf of the people and a state-owned mining company is in the works. In the field of Education, Mantashe believes that the ANC is close to reaching the goals of the Freedom Charter. The ANC has done this by ensuring that 98% of children between the ages of 7 and 18 were now at school and 68% of schools declared no-fee schools. Although not directly addressing the claim made by Mandlana that the ANC had failed to transform higher education, Mantashe did say that the ANC is assessing the nature of the structures of higher education institutions.

Although largely positive in his assessment of what the ANC is doing, Mantashe did raise some concerns about the ANC. Concerns which emerged strongly from his speech were those he called the “sins of incumbency” of leaders in the ANC. These included leaders being elected solely on the basis of an election slate, leading to a culture in the ANC where leaders are accepted based on their presence on the slate and cannot be questioned or interrogated. Further, Mantashe was highly critical of some leaders in the ANC who thought “election to a position leads to personal accumulation”. Mantashe stressed the need to change this.

Before ending his address, Mantashe touched on an issue of sensitivity in the media at the moment, namely the Media Tribunal. He was critical of journalists who view the bill as a threat to democracy, Mantashe warned the media to stop “howling at us, instead engage with us”. If not, he said, “the train would have left the station” and the next time government and journalists would be addressing their differences would be through the Media Tribunal

DA and ID move towards a merger

Sarita Pillay

Leaders of the Independent Democrats (ID) and Democratic Alliance (DA), Patricia de Lille and Helen Zille, have in recent weeks shown signs of moving towards a unified future for both their parties. De Lille made the public announcement at the Federal Congress of the Democratic Alliance on 25 July, where she stated the ID are considering a merger with the DA. Although she addressed the crowd in her capacity as an invited speaker, it soon became clear that de Lille’s presence had an unabashed political agenda. She stressed the need for a strong opposition in South Africa with a realistic chance at unseating the ruling government. In her address she said, “We have a vision of a strong new entity, one that is greater than the sum of our individual parties.” What emerged strongly from de Lille’s address was that the DA and ID look set to create a unified political force.

At the conference, Zille admitted that there

was history of fierce political competition between the two leaders. A recent interview with the Mail & Guardian pointed to differences in the parties’ political ideologies. Zille noted their political histories and organisational structures, while de Lille made mention of their differing economic perspectives. However, their differences seem to be outweighed by their vision for a strong political opposition in South Africa. “We share values and a vision and we know we have to build a new majority to be a challenge at the ballot box against the ANC,” Zille said. What remains to be seen is exactly how the DA and ID aim to combine. Despite the definite intent to merge, the parties are expected to remain formally separate until just before parliamentary elections in 2014. If they merged formally before then, both parties would lose their seats in parliament. This is due to legislation passed last year which abolished floor-crossing. However, the parties have shown intent to sidestep this legislative

obstacle through enabling dual membership of ID representatives in both local and national government. This would effectively allow for ID representatives and councillors to be members of the DA as well as the ID, and thus retain their seats. This plan is likely to evoke strong criticism from the ANC, who issued a burly statement in May opposing the DA/ID intent for dual-membership. “The intention by the two parties is nothing other than a dull attempt to sneak in the abolished floor crossing through the backdoor,” said ANC Chief Whip, Mathole Motshekga. Although dual-membership seems likely to be the first step towards a merger, both parties are adamant that nothing is set in stone, with negotiations said to be ongoing. Speculation in the press is that the official announcement of a merger is likely to take place within the next few weeks. Since the conference in July, both leaders have remained tight-lipped. “All I can say is ‘watch this space,’” said Zille.

Politics

Mid-summer breakdown results in worldwide devastation

Nonceba Mhau

Pakistan: Recent floods in Asia have resulted in half a million of Pakistani residents having to flee their homes in the province of Sandh. It has been reported that the disaster swallowed up entire villages, killing over 1 600 and devastating the lives of more than four million people. These floods are said to be the most threatening floods the country has faced in the last 80 years.

Apart from the high death toll, these floods are reported to have also destroyed numerous crop-producing areas. This has resulted in Pakistan being faced with a possible food crisis due to their agricultural based economy. The floods have swept through the whole country, starting from the Punjab which is the country’s agricultural heartland, to Sindh where it’s reported to have wiped out bridges and roads resulting in villages being totally cut off along a trail which is said to be about 1000 km long.

The Pakistani Meteorological Department alerted that more raging waters are expected. “Monsoon rains continue to fall and at least 11 districts are at risk of flooding in Sindh, where more than 500 000 people have been relocated to safer places and evacuation still continues based on the Meteorological Department’s alerts,” said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “There have been constant rains which have aggravated the situation in the areas already struck by floods,” said Saleh Farooqui, the Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

The political leaders of the country have been heavily criticised by their lack of interest on the effect of floods on the lives of Pakistanis. The President himself, Asif Ali Zardari, left the country on a European visit during devastating floods. It has been reported that he went to Britain for bilateral talks on how to counter terrorism. “Our president prefers to go abroad rather than supervising the whole relief operation in such a crisis,” said Ghulam Rasool, a resident of the town of Sukkur. “They don’t care about us. They have their own agendas and interest.” “We don’t have anything, no one has given us even a single penny,” said Khair Mohamad, one of the residents affected by the flooding.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said the disaster had eclipsed the scale of the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan and the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti put together. OCHA spokesman Maurizio Giuliano said the 13.8 million affected outstripped the more than three million hit by the 2005 earthquake, five million in the 2004 tsunami and the three million affected by the Haiti earthquake in January.

China: Even though the floods in Pakistan are said to be more devastating than the Tsumani, the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 and the Haiti earthquakes this year put together, China was struck with just as much devastation after a flood followed by a mudslide resulted in more than 1300 people going missing.



Reports state that at least three villages were flattened by an avalanche of mud and rocks triggered by heavy rains in a remote area of Gansu province, killing at least 127 people. China is also said to be suffering the worst flooding in a very long time, with more than 2100 people dead or missing nationwide before the Gansu disaster which increased this number dramatically.

Wen Jiabao, Premier of Gansu has reportedly visited the devastated area, urged thousands of rescue workers at the scene to find as many missing people as possible and relief them with food and water. “For those buried under the debris, now it’s the most crucial time to save their lives,” Wen was quoted by state Xinhua news agency as saying.

It’s also been reported that 34 hours after the landslides, rescuers saved a 74-year-old woman Zhouquo, the hardest hit by the floods and landslides in the country. Reports state that the streets were covered in mud 2m thick in places and more than 300 homes were destroyed. She was said to have been in a stable condition and able to speak, citing a rescue spokesman.

The landslides are to have swept mud, houses, cars and other debris into a river running through Zhouqu, blocking the waterway and triggering flooding in the mountainous area. Xinhua also said, the mudslides leveled an area 5km long and 500m wide, with floodwaters up to three storeys high submerging half the county. Roads and bridges were destroyed. These recent flooding seems to be something which is not exclusive

to the Asian continent alone. In the United States, hundreds of people had to be evacuated from their homes after flooding in different parts of the country. In Iowa, heavy rainfall forced the rivers to swell which resulted in

flooding of the town. Hundreds of residents were forced to flee their homes, however one 16 year old girl ended up dying after her car was swept away by a torrent of water. In Ames, it is reported that flooding resulting in a water main break which also forced the city to shut of its water to the residents. Weather services have predicted more heavy rains and possibly more flooding ahead.

National Geographic has predicted that the recent flooding around the world is an indication of the rapid scale of climate change. The U.N.’s network of climate scientists, the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has long predicted that rising global temperatures would produce more frequent and intense heat waves, and more intense rainfalls. If these heavy rainfalls are an indication of climate change, this means climate change is not something which will only start happening in 50 years as previous predictions have indicated. It means climate change has already started and for South Africans. For us, this means much hotter summers.

Flooding in Pakistan has had serious consequences for the region’s infrastructure and agricultural sector. While flooding is expected to continue, the country’s political leaders have been criticised for an apparent lack of interest in the effects of the floods.

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Opinion

Editorial
Something in the atmosphere

Lauren Minnie

My, what beautiful weather we've had this winter- half the time it's clear, warm and summer-like. This is not some sort of stroke of luck, it's a big thing called global warming; a.k.a. the increase in the average temperature of Earth's near-surface air and oceans.

For those of you who are environmental activists, this is quite obvious and you've probably taken several steps to reduce your carbon footprint. For those who don't even know what a carbon footprint is, well, you probably aren't very aware of the damage you've been inflicting on your environment. Got to <http://www.carbonfootprint.com/> for some food for thought.

Problem is, most people, whether they're aware of global warming/carbon footprints/environmental conscious practices, aren't really altering their lifestyle to become eco-friendly. You don't need to be an environmental activist, you don't need to be a vegan, you don't need to tie yourself to a tree, hell (in the name of journalism and objectivity) you don't even need to believe in global warming- just understand the simple concept of every action having a reaction; our presence on this planet impacts the environment around us, and it's time we started respecting that environment.

Quite simply, it's time for everyone in society to realise that we ALL need to make the effort, starting simple, low-budget ways. Don't leave this on the shoulders of the advocates and activists, as much work as they do, they need everyone to play their part. Here are the first few simple steps you can take in your day-to-day life:

- 1) Reduce your electricity and water consumption; turn off your geyser during the day and before you go to bed, and switch to showers. It'll do wonders for your electricity bill.
- 2) Stop buying plastic bags at the shops; keep some in your car or handbag, or invest in a small cooler bag.
- 3) Start recycling! Even if it's simply paper firsts, aim to quarter your weekly garbage by recycling using the orange bags, and making compost from your fruit and veggie waste.
- 4) Meat-free Monday; you won't die if you don't eat meat for just one day a week, as opposed to the hundreds of animals who will, and the environmental costs to rear these animals will kill our land and water supplies.

That's a fairly easy start, now begin to analyse your lifestyle and see where else you can make an effort, and your environment will soon reap the rewards.

Haynes on: Democracy

Bruce Haynes

Bruce Haynes is a Rhodes University student, Allan Gray Orbis Fellow and Capestorm-sponsored spoken word artist. You can follow him on his MySpace and his twitter feed. You can also check him out on his blog at: <http://mental-guerilla-warfare.blogspot.com/>

Bestselling woman author Frances Moore Lappé offered to send me her latest book, 'Getting a Grip 2', from the United States. Lappé's ideas relate directly to the conversation that took place in my previous column's comment section.

This online conversation put forward the concept of 'collectively organising', as a framework for expanding everyone's access to opportunity. To me this goes straight to the root meaning of democracy.

The core of democracy is power, which consists of us.

Power in this context does not mean 'hierarchy' or 'control', but rather influence. According to Lappé, the word that evolved into power meant 'to be able'; in other words: "power means our capacity

The mystical SOS buttons

Travis Carlyle

Oppi Press Online writer, Travis Carlyle prides himself in adding "flair" to even the most mundane of things. This week Travis talks about the SOS buttons found on the Rhodes campus...

They are the silent guardians of our night time escapades, the vigilant warriors against things that go bump in the night... they are the mystical SOS buttons...

We have all been there...

It's late at night, and you're on your way home in a slightly less than sober state from 'Friar Pirates'. As you make your way past Jan Smuts you notice a shady figure in a Hillbrow style hoody tailing you... He grabs your arm; you make like Usain Bolt and sprint.

The assailant lets loose an earth shattering cry of "GIMME YOUR LUNCH BOX!" Sadly for him you have reached SOS button 5 and are moments away from being safely escorted by one of CPU's finest.

They've laid down the law throughout our campus. Blue route, Prince Alfred Street and the "Vertical limit" fall safely under their jurisdiction. By day they are a passing amusement; but by night, a dutiful deterrent and beacon of

to act".

With capacity like this available to us, I find it extremely interesting that only a small percentage of today's students are currently engaged with influencing their wider reality. The bulk of this millennium's adult population seems content to be acted upon.

Engaging with democracy is energising! The reason that we aren't all doing it is because of the widespread acceptance of a cultural story that portrays us as inherently selfish materialists, mainly motivated by furthering our own agendas. Given today's knowledge about our capacity for cooperation (and our deep need to have an impact on something greater than our day to day lives) this appears to me to misrepresent the full extent of what it means to be human.

A newer story that more accurately reflects reality is that we can work together to come up with creative solutions. The only reason we haven't done so yet on a wide-scale, in my opinion, is because we haven't really tried.

Lappé points out, "We evolved to be problem-solvers, to create, to be choosers of our own future!" Evidently, this defines Lappé's understanding of the real meaning of democracy.

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Arts & Entertainment

Improvisation, music and oranges: the Ha!Man hits Grahamstown

Suzanne Smedley

Ha!Man, an internationally acclaimed performance starring Francois le Roux, was staged at the Rhodes University Theatre recently. The show, which was themed ‘The Lure of Oranges’ is an exciting performance crafted from genuine spontaneity - Le Roux walks onto the stage with no preconceived ideas or plan of action.

During the late eighties and early nineties, Le Roux had a “real existential break down” which influenced the style of the show. “I lost faith in a lot of things, including the formal music environment in which I grew up,” said Le Roux. “It formed a parallel with the fall of apartheid and a direct confrontation with the realities of Africa; realities which include the fact that we all stem from this place and are basically shaped by its energy, climate and environment,” he added. From these ideas, Ha!Man was born in 2001. It was preceded by years of improvised performances - first

on the piano, then on the organ and acoustic solo cello. Talking, moving, dancing, writing and drawing all followed.

“The inspiration behind the HA!Man show is relating to people and places of the world through the core medium of music,” Le Roux explained. “As far as ‘The Lure of Oranges’ is concerned, it is orange season: I love the colour, and I will be able to pick up bags of oranges for cheap on my way from Hogsback to Grahamstown

The show also featured his long time friend, actor Nyebho Swartboo, as well as a tribute to local guitarist and Le Roux’s friend, Andrew Peters, who died in May. Le Roux believes that the show is unique in that he is not able to give people a definition, yet at the same time, this uncertainty grounds the audience members and serves them with a unity of universal values and experiences. “The usual divide is between ‘improv’ and prepared, between ‘jamming’ and serious preparation. In the Ha!Man show, it is about authentic creation,

which brings together the playful, the fun, the searching, experimenting with the craft, skill, artistic pacing and structural depth usually wanting in what goes out as spontaneous art,” said Le Roux. After Grahamstown, the show will tour nationally for the next two months and then head over to North America.

Le Roux says that the audience can look forward to not knowing what to expect from his shows. “[They will be] experiencing virtual bungee jumping and the surprise of how meaning actually does emanate from a basis of nothingness,” he says. “The reality is that so many people do not look out for surprise and creativity, which cannot be packaged and be easily described. So they miss it. I cannot give them Fanta. Just an orange. And that apparently does not sell well.” But as he says, “once you have tasted an orange - a really sweet, juicy and living orange...” there is no going back.



The Binding: Christine Dixie’s powerful exhibition

Suzanne Smedley

The Binding, a serene exhibition by Christine Dixie, opened recently at the Albany Museum. In a clean white washed room, Dixie brings to life the muses of maternity and paternity that every child feels torn by.

Dixie, who obtained her Masters in Fine Art at Michaelis School of Fine Art, is currently a lecturer in the Rhodes University Fine Art Department. The inspiration for the exhibition was her son, Daniel, who was six years old when the photographs included in the exhibition were taken. It was this particular age that interested her, as it is at this stage in a young boy’s life that he is hovering between his mother’s and alternatively his father’s world.

The Binding is a title referring to the Biblical story of Abraham and the near-sacrifice of his son, Isaac. In this story, the child symbolically dies and is then reborn through the hand of the father. A Mother’s biological link to her child is clear as she carries it through pregnancy. Through this near-sacrifice ritual in which the father is now responsible for the rebirth of his child, there is visible evidence of his link to the child.

The exhibition includes six large prints which cast shadows on the altars beneath them and surreal veils which hang from the ceiling, invoking a sense of an army barracks or dormitory. The prints take the viewer on the journey of a child dreaming of having a near-sacrifice experience. The child goes through six stages of To Sleep, Bind, Burning,

Offering, Blind and To Dream. The depiction of the child is life-sized and his features adapt according to which stage of the experience he is in.

The boy’s alter-ego shadow lies on the altar below him. It depicts the socialisation of children through modern media. Hundreds of toy soldiers are placed meticulously together to echo the child’s pose. These, as well as the child soldiers on the veils, explore a particular interest of Dixie’s. “From a young age, a multitude of toys and videogames are available which make

children feel very familiar with weapons and war. Toy soldiers, as objects and on screen, familiarise children with war and violence, yet the reality of loss is beyond the child’s comprehension. This disjunction between fantasy and reality is an area that interests me,” says Dixie.

The irony that the plastic toy soldiers are mass manufactured in China and her altering of their figures had more than just literal relevance for Dixie. “While making these shadow boys, I often had to chop off arms and legs of these toy soldiers to make them fit into

the shape on which I was working. This action seemed to in many ways imitate the real violence of war, and positions me in a complex relationship as an artist creating metaphorical images of sacrifice, while addressing the real fears of a mother for her son,” she says. The combination of messages about a parent’s relationship with their child that Dixie depicts in this one exhibition, as well as the meticulous crafting of them, makes viewing The Binding is a very powerful and moving experience.



A piece from Christine Dixie’s exhibition, The Binding, currently being displayed at the Albany Museum. This piece depicts a life-size version of her son made from hundreds of toysoldiers.

The Green Fashion Show: environmentally conscious and fashionable too

Duduzile Luthuli

Environmental awareness continued to reach new heights at Rhodes University when Kimberley Hall West hosted their first ever Green Fashion Show and Environmental Quiz evening last weekend to prove just how central the environment should be in everyone’s lives.

The event, organised by second year Bachelor of Arts student Sarhanna Hassim, and third year law student Gugulethu Majija, was aimed at creating

environmental awareness in the most innovative and fun-filled way. “This fashion show aims to show people that saving the environment is actually cool,” said Hassim.

The idea for the show was born last year, when students from Rhodes University residence Walker House hosted a resident fashion show that encouraged participants to create garments using recyclable goods. After much success, it was suggested that the event be taken to the next level, and so the Green Fashion Show and environmental evening was

created to showcase student-made eco-friendly fashion and accessories.

“Going green” was the main theme of the fashion show, as it aims to highlight the importance of living an environmentally friendly lifestyle. “We are trying to blend intellect and creativity to promote greener living,” said Hassim, as she explained the importance of living green - especially in a small society such as Grahamstown.

The Green Fashion Show organisers joined forces with the Department of Environmental Science, and a number

of its honours students were responsible for putting the quiz questions together. Majija said that the quiz was a way of informing people about the importance of sustaining the environment in an entertaining and effective way. “This is also a way to emphasise the fact that there are things that we can do to make our community better,” Majija continued.

When asked why the environment should be a pivotal element in society, Majija responded by saying that “it’s important in the greater scheme of

things, because we need to look after what we can control. Right now, we are in control of our own society and every little bit helps towards contributing to the bigger picture.”

Both Majija and Hassim hope to see their cause grow into something greater. “It would be beautiful if we could start a movement from it, which is why we started small and hope to make it bigger as time goes,” said Majija. It seems that when it comes to helping the environment, even the smallest of differences can contribute to the bigger picture.

Arts & Entertainment

Dare to bare it all

Chelsea Geach

The ‘My Body My Choice’ exhibition, which opened in Women’s Week at the beginning of August, took the form of a multi-media photographic display. According to organiser Beth Vale, the exhibition featured “over 100 courageous Rhodes women, re-signifying and reclaiming their bodies as sites of strength, celebration, power, love and resistance.”

The opening of the exhibition was a great success, with people queuing outside the doors for a chance to appreciate the message of non-violence and respect for women’s bodies. But baring it all in front of a camera, or being tactfully obscured by just a slogan on board, is not something which is done lightly.

Women wishing to participate had to write a letter of motivation explaining why they wanted to take part. This ensured that all the participants had genuine reasons for being involved, from wanting to stand in solidarity with those who have experienced sexual violence to their own personal experiences.

For second year BA student Bea Hubbard, who took part in the campaign for the first time this year, the motivation was a past of sexual abuse. “It’s something that I find very hard to talk about,” she says, “but through other mediums - like doing this photo shoot - I feel that I can come to terms with it better.”

Although nervous about the shoot,

she was reassured by the relaxed atmosphere of solidarity and acceptance among the participants. As they waited for their turn to strip and pose in the journalism department, the women painted personal messages on boards or on parts of their bodies. At first, Hubbard didn’t know what to write, and asked some of the other participants. “Nobody helped at all,” she says. “They said ‘We’re not going to give you ideas, this has got to be meaningful for you’” Her slogan eventually read “My body = my temple.”

Stripping down was the hardest part. “It was fine, it was just the underwear... it took me an extra second to think, ‘Ok, I’ve got to do this,’” she says. The professionalism of the two photographers put Hubbard at ease though, as she explains: “Nobody’s looking at you and judging - you’re just an art form in a way.”

For Hubbard, and for many of the women who took part in this process of reflecting upon and re-signifying their bodies, the experience was a little scary and very empowering. They hoped to stake a claim on their own bodies, send a message of respect and reverence for the female form, and show their solidarity for those who have experienced sexual violence.

The impact of this thought-provoking exhibition does not stop here, as the organizers hope to extend its run in Grahamstown, and perhaps even take the courageous spirit of Rhodes women to the bigger cities of South Africa.



10 days of freedom and creative expression

Suzanne Smedley

The 10 Day Project, an exciting Rhodes Fine Arts student exhibition held at the Albany Museum recently, displayed works of great creativity, adventure and uninhibited risk-taking.

The students involved were required to select a 10 day period in their holiday and limit the investment they put into each artwork to one day. This way, they were forced to work without any assistance and were encouraged to embrace the freedom this gave them. The aim was for the artists to have fun creating their works without feeling watched, judged or censored. They were also made to work through ideas quickly, be unexpected and find original solutions. The pressure for their work to be overly precise or belaboured was eliminated by the time requirement.

“I am simply blown away by the energy and inventiveness on display,” said Maureen de Jager, the Acting Head of the Fine Art Department. At the opening of the exhibition, she advised students that “this is the ideal opportunity to try something radical, to work outside of the box, to assert your own agency as an artist, and to take your lecturers by surprise. Just say ‘no’ to old-school, conservative thinking and mundane, predictable solutions.”

The work of Francois Knoetze, a second Year BFA student, was judged to be the most successful. Knoetze was rewarded with a R500 art stockroom prize. Entries by third year students Jessica Bosworth Smith and Romie Sciscio were also commended.

“I wanted to work with the idea of waiting in everyday scenarios and locations,” says Knoetze in explanation of his inspiration. “These mundane and unavoidable situations are often the only place where people express their creativity, such as doodles in a notebook while talking on the phone or while waiting for a lecture to end. My concept then evolved to encompass a dual focus: 10 days of Waiting: Sculptural Doodles. By using materials that are found in locations where one ‘waits’, I attempted to transform what would normally be a 2-dimensional doodle on a piece of paper into a ‘sculptural doodle’. Each sculpture was made from a different medium (ATM bank slips, traffic department forms, medical gloves) and subsequently photographed on location. These photographs were displayed alongside the sculptures to



One of the photographs on display, as part of the ‘My Body My Choice’ exhibition, held during Women’s Week.

provide the viewer with a context,” he says.

Knoetze hopes the public, when viewing his work, is able to “see the humour in it and to engage with the sculptures in terms of the possibilities and potential of time spent (or wasted) waiting.

“What made this project enjoyable was having to constantly adapt to the unpredictable nature of the materials I used,” says Knoetze. “Conceptually, it was a great challenge having to start every day from square one; setting out to create an entirely new work. As to whether the project was worthwhile, I found it refreshing to work completely independently for a change,” he says.

Congratulations to the Oppidan Press team for being awarded the SRC Societies Academic and Development Award 2010

Sci-Tech

Climate change and the Polar Regions

Kelly-Anne Frith

Rising atmospheric temperatures, melting glaciers, and rising sea levels are all features of climate change. Scientific models and experimental data indicate and prove that climate change has dramatic effects on the ecosystems around the globe, including the Polar Regions.

The Southern Ocean temperature down to 3 km below sea level has increased. The area of sea ice near the West Antarctic Peninsula has thus shrunk by almost half since 1984. Sea ice plays an important role in regulating the climate. More sea ice leads to more incoming solar radiation being reflected and less heat absorbed by the Earth's surface. Hence, if the sea ice coverage of the Polar Regions decreases, more heat is absorbed by the Earth and the remaining sea ice melts faster.

This feedback cycle is one of the reasons why a change in sea ice coverage is so worrying. Sea ice affects precipitation and the survival of many animal species in the Polar Regions. If the sea ice coverage decreases, so do the chances for survival of these species owing to smaller habitats and territories. In the Arctic, the animals most at risk are polar bears and different species of seals.

Shrinking areas of sea ice along the coast of Antarctica leads to decreasing population of krill as they feed on the algae beneath the ice. Since these tiny

shrimp-like creatures are at the bottom of the food chain, they constitute a major source of food for whales and other mammals and birds, e.g. several species of penguins. If their numbers keep decreasing through climate change, overfishing, competition, and the nature of limited resources, the entire Antarctic food chain could collapse.

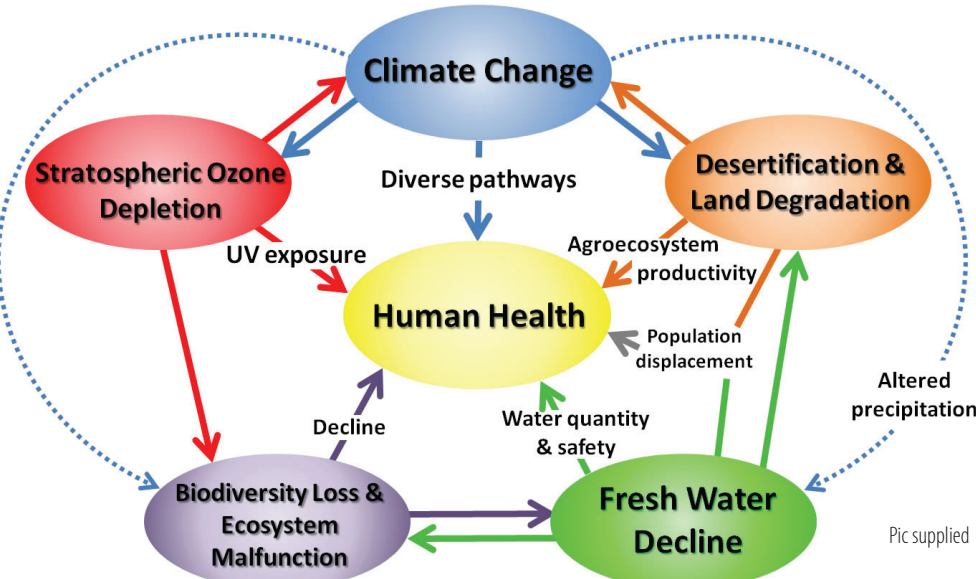
The shrinking sea ice coverage along the edges of the continent has also affected penguins in Antarctica. Populations of several species of penguin have been migrating and "invading" the territory of other species. For example, Adélie penguins, which need land free of snow and ice to raise their young, are now sharing territories with Gentoo and Chinstrap penguins. Warmer temperatures allow the atmosphere to retain more moisture leading to more snow and ice and changing the natural habitat of the Adélie penguin. A competitive advantage is thus given to the Gentoo and Chinstrap penguins over the Adélie penguin. Since 1985, the number of Adélie penguins has dropped by a staggering 65 %.

Increases in winter temperatures, combined with stronger winds, results in thinner sea ice on which the Chinstrap, Gentoo and Emperor Penguin chicks are raised. Chicks and eggs are also being lost by sea ice breaking off earlier and/or eggs being blown off by the strong winds. Chicks are often not ready to survive on their own, and so

they die without their parents.

To date, there has been a 30 to 66 % decrease in the size of different Chinstrap penguin colonies. In the last 50 years, the numbers of Antarctic Emperor Penguin colonies has dropped by up to 50 %. Gentoo penguins are in a similar situation. If the average rise in global temperature reaches 2 °C, 50 to 75 % of penguin colonies in Antarctica are likely to decline or disappear completely. Significant cuts in greenhouse gases are the only way to avoid this scenario.

Over the past few decades, Polar Regions have become sinks of chlorinated pollutants, such as DDT and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which are derived from human activities. These compounds have been produced between 1920-1984 because of their chemical resistance, favourable thermal properties and effectiveness as pesticides. In the environment, they tend to evaporate over land and sea into the atmosphere in the tropical and temperate regions. They are then carried with the atmospheric currents into the Polar



Regions where they undergo condensation and reach the ground as precipitation, mainly snow. Even though their use has been discontinued, significant amounts have accumulated in the ice in Antarctica and the Arctic.

Global warming and climate change can lead to the release of these accumulated pollutants into the polar environment. This is supported by a study conducted in 2008 which revealed that 2.0 to 8.8 pounds of DDT are released each year into coastal waters in the vicinity of the Western Antarctic Ice Sheet in glacial meltwater. These amounts seem small, but they are enough to detrimen-

tally affect sea wildlife. Once released into the water, DDT enters the food chain by associating with fatty tissue in living organisms in a process of "bio-concentration". The higher on the food chain the organism is, the higher the relative DDT concentration in its fatty tissue and the greater the toxic effect of DDT. This means that top predators and large mammals/birds are most likely to be affected. DDT toxicity, due to climate change, might provide an additional reason for declining populations and penguins, polar bears and whales in the Polar Regions.

Climate change and food



The photo by Nimai Chandra Ghosh for the drought ("Sleeping on the river bed") which won the WHO Health and disability 2007: Special Theme: Health and Environment to protest against climate change.

Kelly-Anne Frith

Climate will require that we and the environment around us adapt to the increasing occurrence of extreme weather phenomena. This includes drought. Guaranteeing food security will require the use of new varieties of crops. There is likely to be an increase in the planting of genetically modified crops which are able to withstand droughts and floods.

Genetically modified crops are plant varieties created using the technology of recombinant DNA. Introduction of DNA from another organism, such as bacteria, leads to the enhancement and introduction of new traits into the plant. These traits include resistance to pests

that can damage the harvest; the ability to survive increased concentrations of herbicides; and, the ability to withstand the effects of climate change.

In order for a plant to survive climate change, it would need to possess the ability to withstand increased soil salinity and decreased concentrations of soil nutrients (such as phosphorus, nitrogen and organic carbon).

In 1996, the Monsanto Company brought out a patented variety of genetically-modified (GM) soybean resistant to glyphosate. Having had the demonstration of the success of GM crops, they are currently testing water-efficient and drought-resistant varieties. Transfer of genes from the genetically-modified organisms into the unmodified host vegetation has been

documented, showing that modification of crops can occur.

Non-governmental and humanitarian organisations, such as the Clinton Global Initiative, have been involved in agricultural research, to produce flood-resistant varieties of rice to allow the survival of small villages in the case of serious floods.

Even though there are advantages to the genetic engineering of climate change crops, there are downsides too. By genetically manipulating a plant, there is the concern that new weed could potentially be created with unpredictable consequences. Therefore, labelling and strict legislation will be required to prevent or limit the undesired effects of GM crops in agriculture of the 21st Century.

Health effects of climate change

Kelly-Anne Frith

Climate change, as the name suggests, means that the intricate interactions that create "weather" are turned upside-down. People are both directly and indirectly affected by this change.

One of the major concerns regarding climate change is the impact it has on human health in both developed and developing countries.

Increases in the atmospheric and ambient temperatures facilitate the spread of disease vectors for malaria, dengue fever and encephalitis in developing countries. An increased number of cases and subsequent mortality from these diseases results in loss of economic activity, increased costs, and strain on the health care systems.

In developed countries, the main concern from climate change comes from the health effects of air pollution. Results of epidemiological studies have shown that climate-mediated air pollution has had a substantial and detrimental impact on patients suffering from asthma, chronic bronchitis, allergies and heart conditions.

Higher atmospheric temperatures increase the water vapour pressure, which leads to more intense precipitation – or rain. As a result, the frequency of excessive rain, floods and even droughts increases. If the intensity of rain increases, the runoff (volume of water that has not soaked into the soil) increases. This can, in turn, result in

a higher loading of pathogens, vital nutrients and toxic chemicals reaching water resources. This alters water availability and water quality and may affect human and environmental health.

If the intensity of precipitation increases, then the capacity of the water treatment plants can be compromised. This can result in the drinking water being contaminated with *Cryptosporidium* spp. – an intestinal parasite which causes diarrhoea in humans. This pathogen can persist in water distribution systems for extended periods of time.

Droughts and/or extended dry spells lead to reduction in the volume of water in rivers. This increases the concentration of water-borne pathogens, thus increasing the risk of disease and causing water treatment problems. Reduced water availability puts human hygiene at risk, increasing the chances for the transmission of diseases such as Rotavirus, a diarrhoea-causing pathogen.

Following a study in the USA, outbreaks of waterborne diseases have almost doubled due to increased recreational swimming owing to higher temperatures. This creates an increased risk of contracting gastroenteritis and respiratory infections particularly when swimming during hot, rainy seasons in river, dams or lakes. If the temperature of the water increases, then conditions become more favourable for the growth of algal blooms and cholera-causing bacteria, such as *Vibrio cholera*.

DS

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18th August 2010 at 5pm

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27th August 2010 at 5pm

2-Page CV, motivation letter,

mini-profile and photograph.

How “GREEN” is the world of sports?

Litha Mpondwana

Climate change, global warming, and energy conservation seem to be the trendy topic in world discussions lately, but one rarely hears these topics being thrown around in sports. With the world showing an increasing commitment to combating global warming and conserving energy and the most essential resources on Earth, there is a possibility that sports is not yet on that same wavelength.

Upon reflection, it can be argued that the world of sports is not paying particular attention to the conservation the environment. Just look at the endless construction of golf courses around the world, not to mention the considerable number that gets abandoned midway through construction. This

inevitably has a negative effect on the environment, as when the land that was developed for the golf course becomes damaged, plantations cannot grow on it again. There are various projects, such as the Golf Course Land Conservation Trust, which seeks to protect native species and indigenous plantations in the respective courses. But this phenomenon of golf courses springing up on all four corners of the globe should be of more concern.

The growing construction of mega-structures such as stadiums to house various sporting events in the world is also a factor which is raising concerns about the sporting world perhaps not being the best advocate of energy conservation. As the world’s major corporations continue supporting sports around the world, sports bodies and teams are building bigger stadiums

to satisfy their huge fan bases. While some sports stadiums in soccer and American football, which were built in early to middle 20th century easily seated over 100 000 supporters, they do not match the intricacy in design of modern stadiums. Only a handful of sports stadiums in the world have a capacity of more than 100 000, but modern stadiums have taken advances in their design and material used for those designs. Lighting, fibres and materials used to construct stadiums, as well as pitch treatments, have all raised concerns regarding the extent to which stadium construction is endangering the environment.

Perhaps the most dramatic account of lobbyists against this phenomenon in recent times was the outcry surrounding the construction of the Bird’s Nest, or the Beijing Olympic Stadium,

and the reconstruction of London’s Wembley Stadium. The Bird’s Nest was an ambitious project by the Chinese to create the greatest Olympic stadium ever. In a country which is amongst the top emitters of carbon in the world, there were concerns on the manner in which the stadium was built, where it was argued that the stadium would add further to Beijing’s struggles of containing its environmental issues.

The reconstruction of Wembley Stadium was heavily criticised for its continuous delays and high costs, which were not only taxing to the London economy, but also adding to its carbon footprint.

Evidently, there have been concerns regarding sports facilities being “green”. At the recent Soccer World Cup, the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium officials boasted on how environmentally

friendly the stadium was, and how they treated the pitch naturally and made sure the surroundings of the stadium were also treated and constructed by means which were environmentally friendly. Echoes of energy conservation are also being made, as the lighting in stadiums is being seen as taking little into account when it comes to energy conservation.

From an observer’s eye, it seems like the world of sport is divided when it comes to energy conservation and other climate change concerns. There is the knowledge of the importance of conserving energy, and maintaining environmentally friendly strategies. There is though that dark cloud of sponsorships and other economic obligations, which may hinder this progress of sports becoming, as people call the phenomenon “green”.

Caster races towards Commonwealth

Bulelani Mkula

Despite the ongoing controversy surrounding Caster Semenya’s sexuality and competitive eligibility, the athletics star is still going strong, and has chosen the Commonwealth Games as the setting for her re-entry into the athletics arena.

The gates have been opened for Semenya to make her return after an 11-month break from the athletics scene after the IAAF issued a statement saying that the process that they initiated in 2009 had now been completed – hinting that the results of her gender

tests proved that she is in actual fact female. The break does not seem to have affected Semenya’s performance in any way. She won her first two comeback races in the European circuit just days after the IAAF gave her the green light to compete again. The need to once again prove her abilities as an athlete drove her performance, and saw her ease over a two-lap race in 2.min 4.22 seconds.

Semenya has her sights set on gold at this year’s Commonwealth Games, to be held in New Delhi in October. Winning two of her races in Finland was proof that she is up to the challenge and is a strong contender for the gold.

CAF President to be challenged



Danny Jordaan, the brains behind the 2010 Soccer World Cup may challenge for the top seat in African soccer

Litha Mpondwana

Basking in the glory of what was a very successful 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, Danny Jordaan, who was the chairperson of the Local Organising Committee (LOC), is set to compete for the biggest seat in African soccer. It has been reported that Jordaan is planning to challenge Issa Hayatou for the presidency of the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

The CAF, the governing body of African soccer, has been led by Hayatou since 1988. He has made major strides for African soccer, including increasing the number of African national teams participating in World Cup events, and encouraging FIFA to assist in supporting development at the grassroots level in the continent. He has, however, been renowned for controversies, such as the

manner he has dealt with some problems facing African soccer, factionalism, and alleged corruption; all to keep him in power.

There have been many who have challenged Hayatou for the CAF presidency during his tenure, although none have been successful. Jordaan, who has enjoyed a gradual rise in world soccer over the past two decades, is the man people see as the person who can unseat Hayatou. With CAF being set on electing a new executive committee next year, reports of Jordaan running for the CAF presidency are starting to increase. Given his good rapport with FIFA officials, and a strong backing from the Southern Africa soccer regional body, COSAFA, and the North African counterparts, Jordaan is in line to offer Hayatou his toughest challenge yet for the presidency of CAF.

Jordaan brings with him proven

leadership and organisational abilities, and being the brains behind a hugely successful first World Cup hosted on African soil, he has the support of the public as well as that of who occupy key positions within the soccer world. Hayatou, on the other hand, is perhaps at the lowest point of his leadership. The debacle he caused surrounding the Togo bus shooting at the African Cup of Nations earlier this year, coupled with his reluctance to step down from the presidency, have resulted in a decrease in his popularity. The seemingly lack of progress African soccer has experienced, has also counted against him.

Despite hosting a successful World Cup, African soccer has some work to do, to be competitive against other continental federations. Perhaps a change at the top would be the premise Jordaan will use to oust Hayatou, and take African soccer to greater heights.



The male and female Rhodes Sports Personality of the Year; Anesu Chingono from the Rhodes Soccer Club and AJ Elington from the Rhodes Hockey Club.

The award is given to the person who shows enthusiasm as well as a personality that matches their commitment and dedication to a particular sport. The evening was capped off by the presence of former Springbok Sevens captain Mzwandile Stick who was the guest of honour at this year’s awards.