

March 2016

## Dear Residents

Greetings to one and all of you in this our first edition of *Sea Views* for 2016.

With the headlines dominated by Zuptagate, the growing refugee crisis in Europe, the Brussels and Pakistan Easter terror attacks and the see-sawing fortunes of our economy, it's hard to believe that the year is but a babe.

Despite the topsy-turvy state of world affairs, here at the peaceful haven of The St James we make the most of life and living, reminding ourselves of all the good in the world that doesn't make the headlines.

Staying on the home front we'd like to congratulate managing director Gael Baldwin whose contract has been extended to July 2018.

Gael's association with The St James stretches back over 30 years so it's good to know that this establishment will benefit from two more years of her careful and caring management. We welcome this continuation and it makes absolute business sense!

## A Rose by any other name

May we also extend congratulations to our receptionist, Gill Sutton, who wedded Roland Rose in February after a whirlwind romance of 15 years! (There's much to be said for persistence and perseverance, chaps!)

Gill and Roland were married at a quiet ceremony at Home Affairs on 4 March and the couple enjoyed a brief honeymoon in Tulbagh and at Club Mykonos along the West Coast. The Roses will settle in their new home in Silverglade, Fish Hoek.

Gill is a local girl, educated at Wynberg Girls' High School. She worked in the insurance sector for many years and is also a qualified bookkeeper – and a qualified florist!

But above all, Gill has always loved caring and she has been able to put that talent to good use at The St James. We rely on her to keep our residents well exercised and abreast of theatre, music and the latest in informative talks, via a varied and full programme of entertainment and events.

We wish Gill and Roland many happy years together!

## **Birthday wishes**

Continuing the celebratory theme, our best wishes go to residents who celebrated – or will celebrate – birthdays this quarter. Why should birthdays remain special days, even though some of us have lost count of how many we've tallied up? There is the thinking that birthdays remind us of the concept of rebirth. To recall our birth is to recall a new beginning and it doesn't matter how we fared yesterday, or even ten years ago, as each birthday brings a new beginning in some way.

### **January**

- 8<sup>th</sup> Louise Dunckley
- 9<sup>th</sup> Gillian Fothergill
- 25<sup>th</sup> Erica Duncan
- 26<sup>th</sup> Maurina Zuccarini

### **February**

- 7<sup>th</sup> Marjorie Buret
- 10<sup>th</sup> Hazel Collins
- 11<sup>th</sup> Marshall Bubole
- 12<sup>th</sup> Doreen Ovendale
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Felicity Grattan-Cooper
- 26<sup>th</sup> Lucelle Elcock

### **March**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Olive Gavronsky
- 5<sup>th</sup> Judith Moulton
- 13<sup>th</sup> David Catlin
- 15<sup>th</sup> Denis Scott
- 26<sup>th</sup> Betty Pace
- 27<sup>th</sup> Peggy Layfield
- 30<sup>th</sup> Avril Bergen

## **Outings and aboutings**

We started the year with a visit to the gracious Groot Constantia estate on New Year's Day. Theatre enthusiasts enjoyed an outing to the Masque Theatre on 28 January to see "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare – Abridged".

## **Talks and slideshows**

Our popular programme of talks and slideshows kicked off with Craig Ross talking about the life of a pro golfer on 7 January. Sheila Bennett, Gillian Fothergill's daughter delivered a talk on the 'sights, sounds and tastes' of her travels in Turkey with her husband. This was accompanied by delicious Turkish food, a real treat for those who attended the presentation on 21 January.

In February also we hosted The Sunflower Foundation and on Valentine's Day we held the first Theme Evening Dinner of 2016, a sumptuous celebration, thanks to chef Johan and his team and the musical talents of Lance Field on piano and Mary Ann on violin.

Then came Tony Rozemeyer of the Muizenberg Historical Society who introduced the Muizenberg Historical Walk (which he guides) and efforts behind the upliftment project to restore Muizenberg to its heyday.

Muizenberg is home to many historic sites, including Cecil John Rhodes' former holiday cottage, the railway station, synagogue and the many luxurious mansions designed by Sir Herbert Baker for Muizenberg's former (and current) millionaires.



***Cecil John Rhodes' holiday cottage in Muizenberg***

Residents also enjoyed the musical interludes by music therapist Chris Wildman of the Red Cross Children's War Memorial Hospital (more on Chris later in the newsletter) and Emeritus Professor Geoff Brundrit, formerly of the University of Cape Town, who delivered a talk titled "Adventures on the High Seas".

In March historian Mike Walker was scheduled to give residents a 'virtual' tour of Cape Town's old hotels but due to his equipment shortfall, Cmdr Pieter Breedt was asked to step in and save Gael Baldwin's bacon! The Residents were given an interesting, totally unprepared talk *говорить* on his Russian language expertise. While standing by a ship that was being built for the SA Navy, the Cmdr learnt how to speak Russian and this became useful later, when he was accepted as a Sworn Translator for the Supreme Court W Cape division. He also did work for the intelligence department and this awarded him a "Pro Merito" decoration, entitling him to the letters PMM after his rank. After the Cmdr retired from the SA Navy as Director of Telecommunications and Electronic Warfare he worked as a contractor translating technical documentation and writing technical handbooks for SAS Outeniqua, a Russian icebreaker – Arctic relief ship that the SAN had bought. He also served as a Liaison officer on a Russian cruiser, visiting during the SAN 75 year anniversary.

All of this information and more was provided for, without the opportunity of preparation. An informative and entertaining story of Russian Kings, Icons and swords and how to pronounce certain Russian words kept everyone interested. Спасибо Cmdr Pieter Breedt.

Garth Asquith, who is well known to Residents, entertained us at a Theme Evening Dinner. Old favourite Wouter van Warmelo delivered a slide show, "Namaqualand in Spring" (something to look forward to as the cooler weather has settled in!)

A handful of residents attended the Baxter Theatre for Morning Melodies on 23 March to listen to internationally acclaimed pianist Kathleen Tagg.

We also hosted the monthly Mantelli's chocolate and biscuit sale, just in time for the Easter weekend. On 31 March Margie van Zyl of Geratec/SA Care Forum talked to us about how the organisation cares for the aged.

**Nota bene:**

If you have any suggestions for future outings or events and talks, please chat to Gill at reception.

## **Movie nights**

As autumn closes in, we urge residents to wrap up warmly, swallow Vitamin C regularly, and join the good company in the library for some of the latest box office hits and series.

Some of the titles we've enjoyed recently include:

- Blitz
- Becoming Jane
- Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey series
- Woman in Gold
- Lord of the Dance
- West Side Story
- To Kill A Mocking Bird
- Traces of Sandalwood
- 2015 Royal Edinburgh Tattoo
- Grizzly Man
- The Young Victoria
- Far From the Madding Crowd
- Temple Grandin
- Jimmy's Hall
- The Water Diviner
- Show Boat
- The Bridge on the River Kwai □ Hello, Dolly!
- Something's Gotta Give
- Boy Choir

## Music therapist gets us moving and shaking

It's not often that our residents take to singing and dancing in the library in broad daylight. But thanks to renowned music therapist Chris Wildman we did just that on 24 February when he kicked off a six-week pilot programme at The St James.

Chris has been working as a registered music therapist in Cape Town for 30 years. He is usually found at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital where he runs their music therapy programme for ill children. But for the past 12 years he's also presented weekly sessions for older folk at Cle du Cap in Tokai and Hampton House in Kenilworth.

"I offer weekly movement and music-making sessions for older people irrespective of age or physical capacity. In 45 -minute, interactive sessions 'Liven Up With Music Therapy!' allows participants to choose when and how they participate. When enlivened they can get up and dance, and when tired sit down - just as they would at a party!"

Chris's techniques are based on tai chi to encourage "conscious standing", balancing, movement, partner dancing, group dancing and group instrument playing.

"I use simple percussion and mostly non-verbal vocals to emphasis a playful physicality rather than a cognitive awareness. Some activities encourage movement, playing and singing all at the same time!"

Having worked as a music therapist for over three decades, Chris says his method is entirely improvisational.

"I use my guitar and voice and my programme grows as the relationship with the group develops over time. This makes the programme far more communicative and meaningful for participants than a more didactic or prescriptive approach. Together we build a unique repertoire of activities, musical ideas, jokes and interactive rituals."

Receptionist Gill commented on the hearty response from residents: "Chris really gets them moving to the beat of his guitar and accompanying percussions."

There are more free trial lessons every Monday at 2.30pm until 11 April.



On 24 March counselling hypnotherapist Andy Wilding presented a fascinating topic: psychoacoustics, a lesser-known field described as the scientific study of sound perception.

Andy's been using psychoacoustics, a branch of neurology, in his therapy for some years. Neurologists have found that certain sound frequencies affect our brain activity. The brain 'hears' frequencies between one and 40 hertz. Low frequencies are associated with relaxation and our natural dream state. Higher frequencies such as 30 or 40 hertz make us feel uncomfortable and anxious.

"So perhaps that's why music and rhythm are so powerful for us emotionally and psychologically," he explained on YouTube.

At that lower sound frequencies around eight hertz one is able to relax into a dream state and we're less affected by our "critical thinking" facilities and better able to think positively and create new neural pathways. This is called neural plasticity.

"The brain has an amazing ability to rewire itself and learn new thinking. Repetition thickens neural pathways and the brain forms new ways of thinking," says Andy. "It's not magic. It's science that we didn't understand before."

It's a little like having a personal trainer to help you think positively by rewiring the brain.

## **Throwing light on the ageing eye**

Also in March, optometrist Allan Wise gave a well-attended talk on how our eyes change with age and what we can do to look after them, prolonging our quality of life. But as the years tally up, subtle changes start affecting our vision, says Allan.

However, some vision changes are normal as we get older and only a few conditions are serious. The trick, he says, is to have regular optometric eye examinations. Here are some of Allan's suggestions for good eye health (courtesy of his website):

- You will probably need more light for reading and other close tasks. Move a lamp closer to you or use a stronger wattage bulb.
- When taking medication, be sure to read the label carefully and follow directions. Take your medication in a well-lit room to avoid confusing or mixing up medications.
- Side vision and reaction time may reduce with age, so keep this in mind while you are driving or walking near traffic.
- Limit night driving to well-lighted roads; keep headlights and windshields clean; and do keep your spectacles clean!

## 'Parlez-vous français?'



Have you ever wanted to brush up on your rusty French vocabulary? New St James resident Catherine Lauga Du Plessis is giving free lessons in the Conference room.

What many don't know about Catherine is that she is a prize-winning French translator of renowned South African authors.

The retired University of Cape Town French lecturer's first translation was JM Coetzee's *Dusklands*. Later, she added works by Mike Nicol, Zakes Mda and Es'kia Mphahlele to her list. Her translation of Coetzee's acclaimed novel *Disgrace (Disgrâce)*, won two awards: *the Prix Baudelaire de Traduction* awarded by the Societe des Gens de Lettres and sponsored by the British Council, and the *Prix Amphi*, awarded by Lille University.

Catherine has a master's degree in English from the Sorbonne and an Agrégation in English as well. She met Coetzee soon after arriving in South Africa in 1976. They became friends and colleagues at the University of Cape Town.

As a translator of South African literature, living in situ affords her a valuable advantage. Here, she comes face-to-face with the cultural background, the "referential dimension, the overtones and the undertones" of the society reflected in the writings of Mda and Nicol.

When Catherine retired from UCT in 2001, she became the receptionist to her husband, who was general practitioner in Kalk Bay. He died in 2011. Finding herself lonely in the big house, she accepted immediately the accommodation available at The St James, where she became a resident in June 2015.

She appreciates the unpretentious luxury of the Hotel, the warmth of the residents and the "gracious and irreproachable way the place is run by Gael and her team". Catherine says she could easily lapse from a leisurely to a lazy life. But her excuse for spending a lot of time watching TV is that she is maintaining, and even upgrading, her French as she watches TV5 Monde, the channel in French.

Pending another commission for a translation, she keeps herself "reasonably occupied": exercise sessions, music therapy, bridge, quiz evenings in a team. Regarding the French lessons, she says:

“These are not really classes – no tests, no exams. The idea is to revive memories of (long past) high school French, talking on subjects relevant to the pleasant life at The St James.”

It sounds as if the participants – as well as Catherine – are having fun!

## Art exhibition by Mollie Townsend

Resident Mollie Townsend’s exhibition, *The Story of Icarus*, which opened at The St James on 5 March, has been well received. These graphics were inspired by the ancient Greek myth of Icarus, son of Daedalus, who dared to fly too close to the Sun on his wings of feathers and wax, and paid the price.



The exhibition includes silkscreen and lino cut prints. Fine Music Radio called it “A treasure trove of powerful and contemporary images that illustrate an old, old story”.

Mollie, who is 94, was born in Smithfield in the Free State and studied at the Academic de la Grande Chaumiefre, Paris (1971) and has a BA in Fine Art from the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town (1972-1975).

Her husband was a civil engineer and after World War II he was posted to Zambia between 1954 and 1956 and then to Botswana from 1958 to 1971. They settled in South Africa in 1973. Among Mollie’s many commissions are the designs of two Botswana postage stamps (S.G.186-189 and 249-252).

Mollie has held numerous solo exhibitions and taken part in many group exhibitions in Africa and Europe, including the Cape Town Biennial 1979 and the Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris 1984. She still keeps her hand in. Her lavishly illustrated book, *Light in False Bay*, includes 60 of her paintings as well as the history of False Bay, from Cape Point to Cape Hangklip.

## Poet's corner

Here's something for the poetry lovers among us. In this issue of *Sea Views* we share two poems entered in our Three Score and Ten Poetry Competition in 2015. The first is by Vonnie Romano and the second by Adre Marshall who won the competition with a poem called "This".

### THEN & NOW – a sonnet

Heady syringas a garden in spring  
A rhythmic mantra that the train tracks sing  
amo amas amat as in a trance they kiss  
entwined under a rising moon she day-dreams  
of sheiks on the way to school romance true  
love exotic lands monsoons but then she sees  
guillotined by the wheels a headless chicken  
doing its manic dance

Now her journey's more confined from the train she  
still climbs slopes flies kites surfs turquoise waves  
sees a lone arum bloom in winter shade picks ever-  
lastings hears a scops owl call memories flash by  
ecstasy and pain still-life framed in the windows of a  
train

**By Vonnie Romano**

## **In Dire Kneed**

I never thought that I could be

In thrall to a mere hinge, a knee

A knee whose foot was always pressed

On hiking trails or mountain crest

A knee that would skip up hills, down dale

Fly over boulders, never quail

Up India Venster, down Left Face B – Table

Mountain a mere molehill for this devotee

Now this knee shoots shafts of pain along my leg

Not bending, it buckles, it's a powder keg

About to blow up, sending splinters of bone

Showering over the fynbos all the way home

I'm told that the fault is entirely mine

Resulting from years of abuse to knees and to spine On

Sundays, instead of genuflecting with a lens before a flower

I should have bent my knees, indoors, to a higher power!

**By Adre Marshall**

## **Last words**

*“An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind.” – Mohandas Gandhi.*

Until the next edition of *Sea Views* in June, stay warm and dry in the midst of the changing seasons. And as autumn approaches (sometimes in the guise of late summer), it may be time to consider flu vaccinations and extra rations of vitamin C.

Do stay abreast of the events planned at The St James. Check the noticeboards for announcements of talks, presentations and activities. There is always something planned to keep us stimulated and involved as the seasons of hibernation arrive!

With love

**The Sea Views Editor**