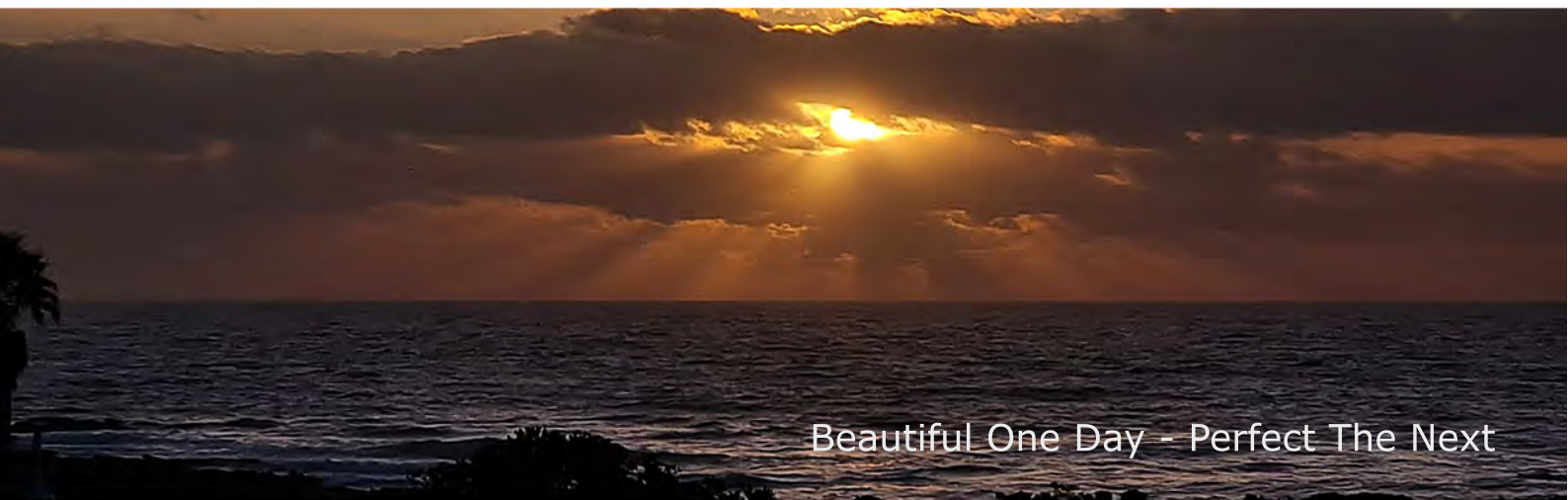


NewsLetter



GROTTO BAY PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE



Beautiful One Day - Perfect The Next

December 2022 Newsletter

BARN OWLS

Our Barn Owls are doing so well in our estate and sightings are becoming more frequent which is very exciting. This beautiful family of 7 babies are nesting under a member's eaves!



Please remember that your dog poop needs to be picked up, our dung beetles cannot cope!

Message from our Chairman – Rob Bailey

Greetings fellow Grottonians,

Yet another year has flown by, and it seems that the holiday season has rather suddenly presented itself to us with all the last-minute preparations that are now demanding attention in order to be ready for it.

From a GBHOA point of view, it has been a very busy year, with many new ideas being implemented and some old ones being modified. Some long-term plans have hit the proverbial red tape with the attending frustration of rising costs the longer matters take. From a personal point of view, some of us have been very busy with work and family, while others are enjoying the fruits of a lifelong career, but as Grottonians, we share and are all blessed with this beautiful, restful yet dynamic place that we call home.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have actively sought to make Grotto Bay a better place to live in, whether it be through volunteering, serving on sub committees, participating in programmes or making yourself available to advise the board in your professional capacity.

To my fellow directors, the estate manager, and staff, I thank you for the hard, dedicated work put in this year and look forward knowing we can depend on the same in the year to come.

As we approach the holiday season, I wish one and all a restful year end and for those to whom Christmas has religious significance, I trust that it may be a blessed time for you and your loved ones.

Warm regards
Rob

The Southern Right Whale

In this newsletter we feature the Southern Right Whale

The southern right whale (*Eubalaena australis*) is a baleen whale, one of three species classified as right whales belonging to the genus *Eubalaena*. Southern right whales inhabit oceans south of the Equator, between the latitudes of 20° and 60° south. In 2009 the global population was estimated to be approximately 13,600. The southern right whale is readily distinguished from others by the callosities on its head, a broad back without a dorsal fin, and a long arching mouth that begins above the eye. Its skin is very dark grey or black, occasionally with some white patches on the belly. The characteristic calluses on the southern right whales' skin function like fingerprints and identify each whale throughout its life. Calluses are elevated areas of skin (more than 5cm thick) on different parts of their heads. They are rather active on the water surface and curious towards human vessels. They are calm, curious and quite slow to swim (reaching maximum speeds of 9 to 11 km / h). To communicate they jump and splash their fins in the water. They tend to interact with humans.

Southern right whales display strong maternal fidelity to their calving grounds. Calving females are known to return to calving grounds at 3-year intervals. The most observed calving interval is 3 years, but intervals can range from 2 to 21 years. Calving takes place between June and November. The calf usually remains with its mother during the first year of its life, during which time it will double in length. This species has been recognized to nurse unrelated orphans on occasions.

Southern right whales feed almost exclusively on zooplankton, particularly krill. They feed just beneath the water's surface, holding their mouths partly open and skimming water continuously while swimming. They strain the water out through their long baleen plates to capture their prey.

It is one of the largest species of whale: the average male is 13 to 15 meters long and the average female is about 16 meters. They weigh around 40 tons. They can live for up to 100 years.



Safety First

The holiday season is upon us, and Grotto Bay will be filled with friends, family, and holiday makers once again. Please remind your guests of our speed limits and the children not to walk or ride their bikes in the middle of the roads. Remember that it is also our fire season and that open fires are not allowed, nor is smoking while walking around the estate or in the nature reserve.

Please be extra vigilant when walking in the reserve as the ostriches are protecting their young now and they will come for you if you get too close.



A Honey Badger also confronted a member and her dog recently and destroyed a beehive.



Look out for the venomous snakes that are more active in the warmer weather and sightings of caracal have become fairly regular which is very exciting.



Downing Tools – Alistair Wallis



It's been one heck of a year and for some of us, it probably feels like life accelerated past the frenetic pace even before Covid turned our world upside down. Even with hybrid and work from home being more accepted in the professional world, it can still be a challenge to maintain a work – life balance, especially when we sometimes have an expectation to be more available for family commitments. The new houses and projects have been keeping our Aesthetics Directors, Estate Manager and staff very busy. The builders have undoubtedly been feeling the pressure to complete new residences in double time! I would like to thank all

the stakeholders involved who helped in engaging and doing their best to accommodate for neighbours, noise etc while trying to get the job done. The time has come to down tools and spend some quality time with family and reflect on the opportunities, challenges, and life lessons 2022 has brought us. I wish those who are travelling a safe journey and are hopeful that 2023 will dawn on Grotto in its usual spectacular display of colours and bird song with all of us safe, rested and ready for another year sharing our beautiful and unique piece of paradise.



Some Conservation News – Michelle Vorster-van Acker

The invasive reeds have been cleared from pond in front of the Conservation Centre allowing access for our wildlife to come and have a drink. We imagine it won't take them long to realize this, so why not come and sit quietly on the benches and relax for a bit with a picnic, who knows what you may see?



Just in from CREW – We managed to add 21 new plant species to the list! This was after their last inspection of the area we block burnt in 2021.

Waste Warriors

The recycling is going from strength-to-strength, nearly doubling in volume since inception. Last collection = 790kg. Well done!

Every piece of plastic put in a bag is potentially one less in the sea. Please continue with this but make sure the items are recyclable and clean.

Aquatic Action

2nd Beach hour monthly clean-up took place. Our numbers dropped from 12 people to 6 people on the day but great to see that age is not a deterrent to joining in this 1-hour action every month. Thank you to everyone who participated in and arranged the beach cleanups during the year and those of you who take a bag with you every time you go for a walk, it is much appreciated.



Conservation Conscious

We've completed cutting the fire access paths in our conservation greenbelts between the houses. A reminder that these greenbelts allow for freedom of movement for our wildlife, like bokkies, mongoose, snakes, caracal, birds etc. and that access to these paths are not allowed. Dogs should be always on a leash within the estate and reserve, including the paths to the beach.



Feathered Friends

Grotto Bird Club, led by Chris Lamprechts completed their epic 12-month observation of our bird life. They were guided by the experienced & knowledgeable Eike & Pieter Diederichs. The final total = 81 species out of 105 sighted. We are very proud to include this in our annual Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for Grotto Bay.

Holiday Hacks to Make Your Life a Little Easier This Season – Driekie Collins-Odendal

Chances are you're already stressed out by the holidays. It feels like you don't have enough time, enough money, or enough of a break during the break, which is why it's important to take care of yourself and find shortcuts for making the holidays less tense. Whether it's decorating, wearing an ugly sweater to your office party, or finding the perfect gift, here are some holiday hacks to take the stress out of the season.

1. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CHEAP SHIPPING AHEAD OF TIME



If you're planning to get your gifts off to family and friends across South Africa, make use of PEP's wonderful and cheap initiative. Your parcel is sent between PEP branches and is dirt cheap – there is a PEP in Darling and the steps are easy and simple.

2. DE-STALE YOUR LEFTOVER CHIPS

When you have five half-emptied bags of chips following a party, and you're looking at eating nothing but chips for the next week, you can either feed the birds or take the inevitable staleness out of the chips by tossing them into your oven for a few minutes.



3. LABEL CHRISTMAS GIFTS WITH FAMILY PICTURES



Add a little extra festive cheer to your gifts by using family snapshots in the place of name tags. Simply print digital photos on white cardstock, cut into decorative shapes, and attach to your presents.

4. WRAP GIFTS WITH FABRIC

Save money, save time: Those are the end goals of any holiday hack. Try to repurpose what you already have for unique, fun wrapping -- say fabric scraps for smaller presents that can travel with you without worry of the paper ripping or bows bending. Place your box in the centre of the fabric and tie the ends together in a tight knot.



5. USE ICE CREAM CONES TO TURN CUPCAKES INTO CHRISTMAS TREES



Create the perfect Christmas cupcake with our Tannenbaum design. The secret to the leafy topping? Place an ice cream cone upside down atop your snowy, white-frosted cupcakes, then pipe green frosting onto the cone for the leaves. Carefully add edible pearl candies for the ornaments.

The holidays are demanding, and hacks can only trim your time and budget down so much. With so much extra duties on our plates, it's important to actively plan some low-key relaxation time for yourself. Prepping a big family dinner or party? Maybe plan to get a quiet coffee with a friend the day before. Struggling to come up with activities for all your visiting relatives? Even five minutes of solo meditation can make a big difference.

6 WAYS WITH CHRISTMAS LEFTOVERS?

It's the most wonderful time of the year. And to make the festivities and feast last even longer, we are showing you 6 ways with Christmas leftovers, perfect for Boxing Day brunch.

1. When baking your ham, reserve, strain and freeze the pan juices. If your ham is boned, reserve that too. Cook 500g frozen peas with 750ml pan juices (and the bone if using) and a few fresh mint leaves, then liquidise it (remove the bone first), and you have a delicious pea and ham soup. Serve chilled or warm.

2. Make cassata with leftover Christmas cake or pudding by slicing the cake/pudding very thinly, no more than 1cm. Pour 100ml brandy all over. Line a pudding bowl first with plastic wrap, then the slices. Soften 500ml good-quality vanilla ice cream and pour into the bowl. If you like, add some chopped pecan nuts or walnuts to the mixture. Dried citrus peel would also work. Freeze the mixture, then turn it out and you'll have a delicious cassata for dessert.



3. Chop or shred bits of leftover turkey and combine it with sliced mango, some dried cranberries, a few pecan nuts and some salad leaves. Make a dressing of olive oil, lemon juice, honey and mustard and toss into the salad for a great light lunch.



4. Mash chopped leftover roast potatoes, turkey, peas and carrots together and form into patties. Fry in a little butter and oil over a medium heat to make breakfast hash browns.

5. Leftover ham can be diced and added to an omelette. This is even better if you have a little Emmental or Gruyère cheese to melt into.

6. Leftover Cranberry Sauce Overnight Oats. Who knew that leftover cranberry sauce could be such a sweet and colourful way to liven up your morning bowl of oatmeal?!

All you'll need are rolled oats, chia seeds, your favourite milk, Greek yogurt, cranberry sauce, and chopped walnuts for the topping. Mix everything and stick it in the fridge overnight. Warm it up the following day for a quick and easy way to make breakfast.



Kid's Corner

Here are some ideas for finger painting with your children in the holidays.

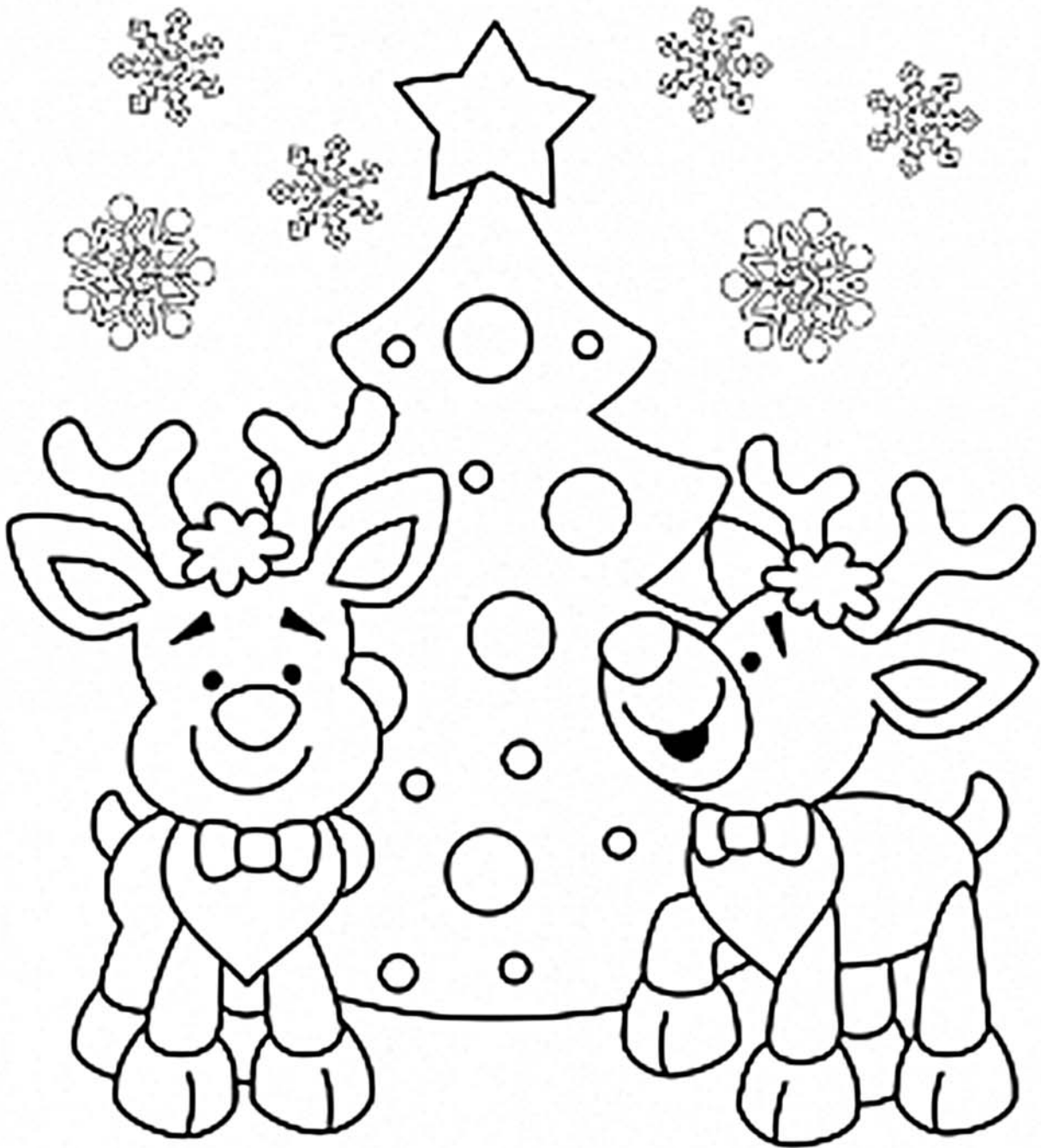


Dr Suess



For anyone who has grandchildren living abroad, in Johannesburg or even in the next suburb, the Caribu App allows you to read stories, play games and more with your grandchildren. You can download it from the App Store or Play Store onto your smart phone, tablet, pc or smart TV. A bedtime story with granny tonight, what fun!

Colour me in.



Christmas Bedtime Story

Kids Christmas Stories | Saint Flipperous | Bedtime Stories (storyberries.com)

Don't forget to go to Sandplover Close and see all the beautiful Christmas lights that Dennis & Thomas have put out for Santa, his reindeers and for all the children!!

Air-fryers are all the rage!

Do you know that you can cook almost anything in one, from bread to cakes, sosaties to roasts, puddings and more. Here is a recipe for Cheese and Onion Bread, perfect for all those holidays braais.

Serves 6 - 8

Prep time 20 minutes plus rising time

Air-fryer temp. 160 degrees C

Baking time approximately 30 minutes

Dough:

340 g white bread flour

5 ml salt

5 g instant dry yeast

120 ml warm water

Filling:

40 g soft butter

30 ml finely chopped fresh parsley

1 clove fresh garlic, crushed

4 spring onions, sliced

Salt, to taste

20 g grated Parmesan


25 g grated white cheddar cheese

Dough: Sift the flour, salt and yeast into a large bowl. Add the water and stir to combine. Knead for 10 minutes. Once the dough is smooth and elastic, roll it into a ball and place into a large bowl. Cover with a damp tea towel. Set aside to rise for about 2 hours or until double in size.

Filling: When the dough has risen, stir the butter, parsley, garlic and spring onions together, season with salt. Knead down the dough and roll it out onto a lightly floured surface so that it forms a rectangle. Spread the filling over the dough and then sprinkle with the cheeses. Roll up the dough so that it forms a long roll. Use a sharp knife to cut it into 6 – 8 even sized rounds. Place the rounds into a greased 15 x 20cm aluminium baking container. Preheat the air-fryer to 160 degrees C. Place the container into the air-fryer basket and cook for 25 to 30 minutes. Serve warm.

That utterly sick feeling you get after eating or drinking too much is called crapulence. This can happen often at this time of the year! Try this remedy.

Put these ingredients in a tall glass with lots of ice

 Cucumber + lemon + mint + ginger + water



RECYCLED CHRISTMAS DECO - Driekie Collins-Odendal

Since I am the queen of our Recycling Project, I thought to add two fun ideas to use waste around the house in a creative way – keep the little ones busy.

Empty your espresso capsules to illuminate your Christmas lights by simply punching a small hole in the bottom of the capsule and pushing each light through the bottom of a capsule.

