



KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

Insect hotels

Although Korsman's insects don't actually need further accommodation, these school learner creations are intended to be educational and add visual interest to the southern side of the Sanctuary.

The project was co-ordinated with Stephanie Geral, art teacher at Benoni High School. Benoni High and Linden School took part this year and we hope the excitement rubs off to more in 2020.



Ecological Bee Removal Complete

In our Autumn newsletter we reported how bees had moved into a tree on the verge. Volunteer beekeeper David Snow set up a funnel and box connected to the tree. The bees transfer to the box over time. When they have moved the queen out of the original hive, the box can be relocated.

Although the process took longer than expected, it was successfully accomplished and the colony has been saved from potential destruction by man.



Can you spot the queen?

She is the larger, yellower bee on the top left corner of the wooden frame.



The hive was moved at night when bees are less active

Water Level Measurement Project

By John Livesey

At the Conservancy we look after a pan and its surrounds, but what influences the pan's water levels?

Defining the catchment area is possible. But how much rainfall finds its way into the pan, how much evaporates and how much runs in from municipal leaks (not inconsiderable as we have found). Apparently simple matters can be a challenge.

Despite these difficulties we took it upon ourselves to keep a record of the fluctuating pan levels. Jane spends a lot of time in the pan but apparently not in the same place all the time so calibration was not an option. It was accepted, reluctantly in my case, that it would need us to launch the canoe and check an existing post deep in the water, and place more posts.



Ready to launch the "Flamin' GO" canoe

Although we felt that the Berg River canoe marathon would not be beyond our capabilities we soon realised that any portage sections more than five meters would be out of the question. I adroitly had Jane sit in the front where she couldn't see I was hardly paddling. We then marked the water level on that post and recorded the depth as a benchmark.

Jane had so easily paddled out with my limited help that I volunteered to bear the brunt of the paddling back. It soon became apparent that Jane's leg had been downhill and I was in effect paddling upstream and into the wind. However my natural stamina was confirmed as I quickly recovered after Jane carried me out.



Scientists calculate evaporation by formulae and tables. We use a marked pole, tape measure and do the sums.

This just left us to walk into the water from the shore to drive in marker posts at a point clearly visible from the bank. This to be later refined when we hammered in threaded bar with bolts at 10cm intervals, for ongoing depth measurement.

One question remains unanswered in my mind. Has Jane now named the boat because I was shouting "Flamin' GO" on the return leg or because I happened to be kneeling in the boat on one leg, the other leg in the water, and an alarmingly pink face.

*Read more of John's writing on his blog
<https://livewiresa.wordpress.com/>*

Litter Pickups in Pictures

At the end of November, after our late rains came, we carried out a “Dangerous & Dirty” pickup that lived up to its name, and followed it a few days later cleaning the remainder of the Sanctuary. Adolf Hüster kept it in the community by collecting the bags.



In October, a corporate volunteer group from Booking.com did a thorough pre-rain cleanup



Call an E.F.F (Efficient Friendly Fellow)



Hendro and Eric searching the shore



Jennie escaped being a stick-in-the-mud



Carole says it wouldn't fit



Sturdy litter fences, a project by Tracy Boggis, are trapping a good percentage of litter



Kevin having bags of fun



*Wednesday Warriors
Picture: Rivelle Govindsamy, Benoni City Times*

From the archives

Our water level project was spurred on by finding this 1938 aerial photo of Westdene, in which the Pan is dry. The photo would have been taken in winter when skies are clear. The average water level was clearly much lower than today.

The Drive was a gravel road, and the Pan was unfenced. It was first protected in the 1950s when Councillor Nic Korsman, who was horrified at how dogs killed the bird life, had it declared a bird sanctuary.

This photo, also from the 1930s, was taken from No 48 The Drive. Again, the water level is low. The gravel road is visible through the gate. The houses on The Drive were considerably more modest than nowadays.

This photo comes from one of our members, whose mother is pictured. Do you have any historic photographs or documents of the pan that we can copy for the archive?



GALLERY
Flamingo Ballet by Eugene Liebenberg
(better than Swan Lake)

