



KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020

WEED PULL WORK PARTIES January and February

In our second year of removing the Acalypha weed, it germinated denser than last year. Several work parties were required to clear it.



Members and the community 'pulled' together.



SANBI came from Pretoria to help out



Making new friends



At grassroots level



Jazzy gumboots add flair to weeding outfits



Don't say cheese, say WEEDS



Hungry weeders treated to surprise refreshments from members and the community

Willowmoore High Grade 8 and 9 Interact Club serving the environment



Getting close to nature

HILARY'S GROUND VIEW

I have always loved the Korsman Sanctuary, where I have walked most Sundays and public holidays for at least 20 years.

Now having recently joined as a member of the Conservancy I took part in a litter clean up last year and have a feeling of “ownership” and responsibility ... even to the point of helping Jane herd two Egyptian geese and their tiny goslings which were pacing aimlessly along the fence, through the Divot gate to the protection of the Conservancy.



Then on Wednesday came my real grounding with a whoopsydaisy.

I joined a group of twenty-odd volunteers... mostly experienced weeders.

I stood around trying to spot the weeds for about 10 minutes then noticed that no one was at my level ... everyone was busily pulling out the offending intruder weeds at a great rate while plonked flat on their bottoms with their legs spread out and their packets rapidly filling up, chatting away about previous weedings and comparing this one “the wet ground helps“ and “quite easy to spot”.

Well, there was nothing to be done but to join those in the know at grassroots level and even though I wasn't sure how I would get up again ... whoopsydaisy down I sat (on a damp bottom).

Once I was at ground level I found them a lot easier to spot ... to me they looked like small blackjacks with what looked like the beginnings of a strawberry on top. “I can do this,” I thought, although my previous weeding history actually dates back to avoiding studying for matric prior to exams!



Anyway I set to with a will and thought about how fortunate I was to be there sitting on the grass in the conservancy on a Wednesday morning with the sun on my back and hat, the smell of the damp ground and grass and the wonderfully peaceful surroundings ... sacred ibis, gulls, bishop birds, herons (even a Goliath Heron a distance away from our party) and the cherry on the top for me... proximity to MY flamingoes.

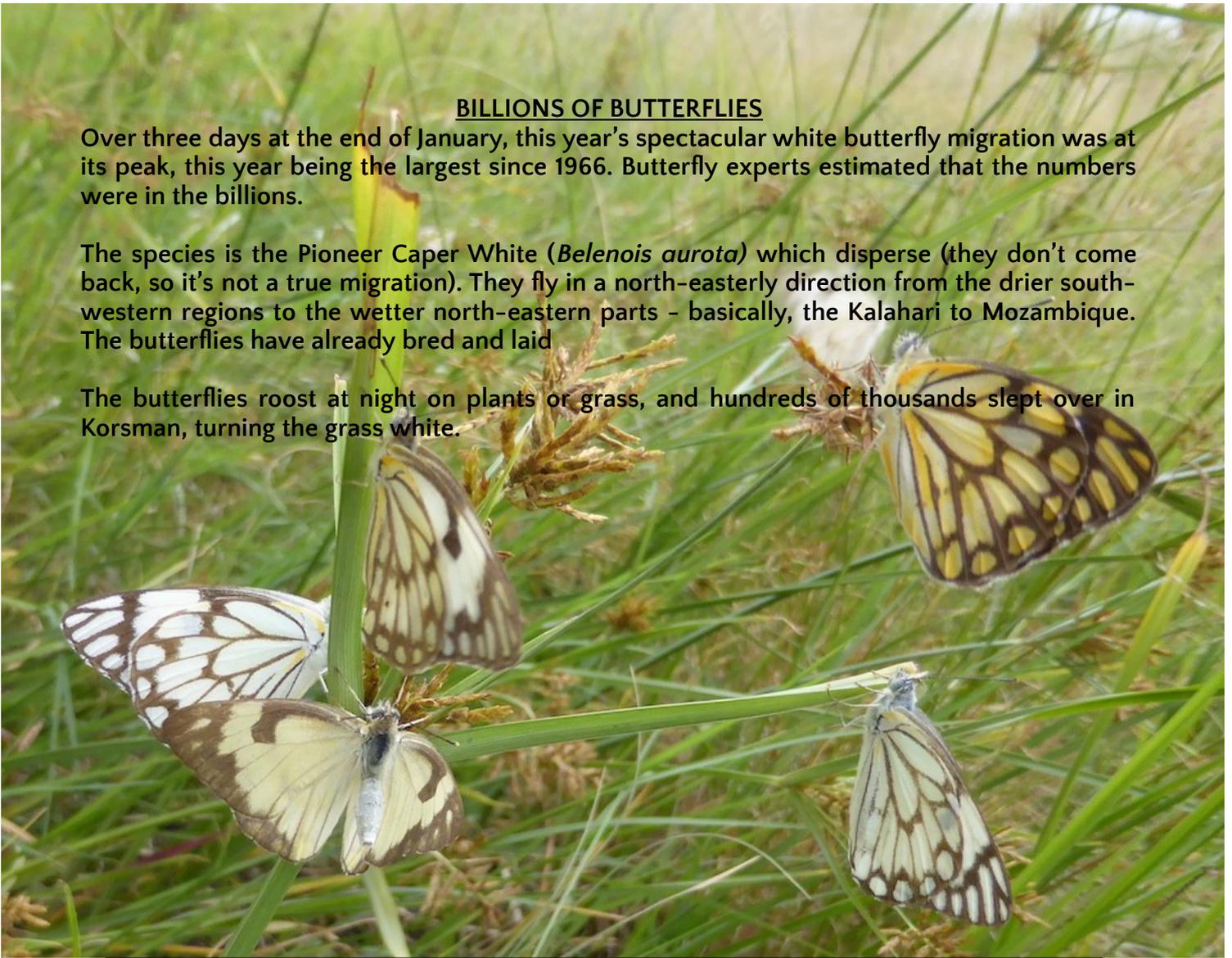
Hilary Green is the retired editor of the Benoni City Times, ongoing supporters of Korsman Conservancy.

BILLIONS OF BUTTERFLIES

Over three days at the end of January, this year's spectacular white butterfly migration was at its peak, this year being the largest since 1966. Butterfly experts estimated that the numbers were in the billions.

The species is the Pioneer Caper White (*Belenois aurota*) which disperse (they don't come back, so it's not a true migration). They fly in a north-easterly direction from the drier south-western regions to the wetter north-eastern parts - basically, the Kalahari to Mozambique. The butterflies have already bred and laid

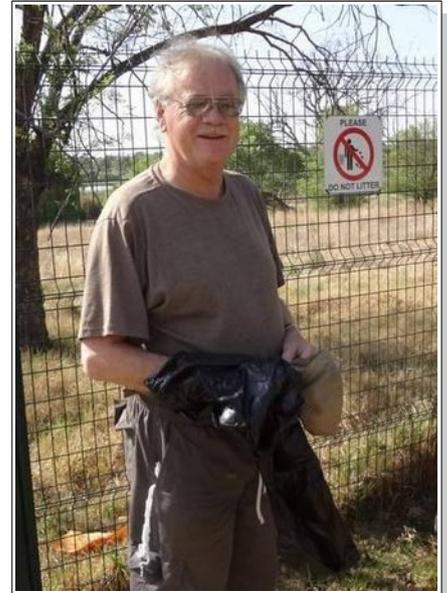
The butterflies roost at night on plants or grass, and hundreds of thousands slept over in Korsman, turning the grass white.



Memorial Berm

The late retired Pam Golding Properties estate agent David Featherston was known around Benoni for his charitable work, but few people knew of his love for Korsman and the contribution he made over many years. David arranged the Pam Golding sponsorship to raise viewing berms in 2014 and 2015.

In tribute to David, Pam Golding Properties sponsored the building of a new berm. Together with landscaper Calvin Becker of Plantcentric, we built the berm near the Pan St corner for a view looking north.



David was dedicated to keeping Korsman clean

Citizen science becomes real science

The British Museum of Natural History in London has been very helpful identifying our beetles from photographs as we discover what is in Korsman.

Last year, a curator got quite excited when he identified the species *Bicolorizea pectoralis*, as the most recent specimens in their Collection were over 100 years old. He asked me to collect some. I delivered them on my last flight to London and Korsman is now represented in one of the world's most important entomological collections.



GALLERY: THE GRASSLANDS

Korsman's biome is Highveld Mesic (moist) Grassland which supports the ecosystem and bird life. Close up, it is beautiful in itself.

