

## Opinion

## Casual SOMA leaves dignitaries, mayors and media out in the cold

The State of the Municipality Address (SOMA), held by Kouga Municipality at the end of February this year was low-key with many important persons uninvited, plus several VIP dignitaries, such as mayors from surrounding municipalities, if not all, and mainstream media (bar DA bloggers) left off the guest list!

And if that was not bad enough the ANC decided to boycott the event because of several grievances, the main one mentioned in a media release was because of "non-involvement of IDP & Budget Projects including the dilapidated condition of roads in township areas, and including the removal of expenditure on KwaNanzamo Community Hall from the Budget - hence the protest march in Humansdorp earlier this month."

St Francis Chronicle has for many years out of 15 published full pages of photos of the best dressed distinguished guests after the event. But this year, whether it was for municipal cost-cutting reasons or because of forgetfulness or lack of knowledge about who to invite on the part of the administrative manager, whose task it was to send out invitations, several well informed attendees told this paper of the big embarrassment and many red faces when it was realised that many dignitaries, the mayors of surrounding municipalities in the Eastern Cape, and media representatives were not present as they were not on the invite list!

As a result, what with the absence of the largely Xhosa contingent from SOMA, which group for more than 15 years has added a glorious blaze of colour, singing and dancing and bringing jubilation to the otherwise boring event, plus the absence of dignitaries in their finery, there was a decided lack of fanfare at SOMA 2018, hence the lack of photos published anywhere, bar a few on the official municipal website.

SOMA has traditionally been a red carpet affair in the past, when the media would take many photos of officials and dignitaries arriving in their finery, as media do at the national SOMA and other celebrity events. The occasion last month then was in sharp contrast to the joyous occasions in all previous years when councillors and invited guests used to arrive in either stunning traditional African dress or mostly evening dress.

It was a big surprise then that those Council members that did attend this year's event did not bother to really dress up. Observers told

this paper that SOMA, which the ANC dubbed the "DA Roadshow" as it was a 30-40 minute event, was more like making a statement of business as usual meeting. The photos on the municipal website bear testimony to this.



To be fair a few ANC women in the municipality arrived at the municipal offices early in the morning in stunning outfits and beautifully made up, but they returned home following the boycott by their leaders. And, again to be fair, one or two municipal staff dressed up in evening wear but most wore smart casual and some of the administration entourage looked officious in corporate outfits. Even the mayor, Etza van Lingen (see official photo above), was comparatively formal with a DA-blue coat and blue nail polish.

But this was not an office meeting over lunch, "one regular attendee pointed out, 'this was the annual SOMA, which traditionally has been considered a prestigious event with glamour and dressing up to the nines!'" Then the event was held off the beaten track at the renowned wedding venue, The Barn at Lombardi. And though the venue is lovely and upmarket SOMA itself was definitely played down and a more subdued, sombre occasion, attendees told this paper. As was to be expected in politics, especially ahead of election year in 2019, in her very long speech Van Lingen again regularly criticised and laid any blame on the previous administration while lauding or heaping amplified praise of the DA's achievements over the past year.

A big warm welcome to all the visitors to St Francis, Kouga and PE, during the holidays!

We wish the weather will be great and that enough rain will have fallen so the effects of the drought will not be so prevalent during your stay on our shores and coastline.

Some local and Eastern Cape businesses and establishments have organised some events for the holidays (see page 10, forthcoming events).

This month it is at St Francis Chronicle's 15th Birthday of publication! The first one was on 15 March 2003. There have been quite a few highlights over the years, (see page 16).

This month we have fabulous news that the five-star golf estate, St Francis Links has moved up another notch, making it not far behind the long established No 1 golfing venue, namely Fancourt, and giving the latter a big run for their money. There is no doubt about it, the Links management team knows exactly what guests want and expect from a top establishment and goes those extra miles to ensure that the local golf course exceeds visitors' expectations!

Then we have some good news of the start of repairs, at long last, to the Spit, aka the precarious man-made, battered and ripped sand dune, which is the only protection for the pristine canals and its homes from the sea.

Then there is an account of the municipality's attempts to dig boreholes that will provide enough water. Questions keep on being asked why they do not repair instead (for sure it's a less costly exercise) the broken pipes and pumps that for more than three decades adequately provided enough water for the St Francis area from the plentiful underground supply that comes all the way from rich water fields near Thyspunt - except at season time if enough standby water was not made available during season owing to increased numbers of visitors.

## Editorial Column



The previous municipal government, prior to the DA, decided for convenience reasons to stop using the pumps and pipes and opt to use Nelson Mandela's water supply as well, namely water from the Churchdam dam which is now fast dwindling away. PE critics say St Francis should rather use its own water than waste that needed by the critical drought area of PE.

Then we have highlights of some of the main stories this month, that of the 'no-school bus saga and the protests that blocked the road to St Francis Bay. As it is election year in 2019, it is to be expected that some political parties (the left and the right) want to take over ruling the nation and that there will much back stabbing and criticism by opposing parties of one another, (more protest marches and other destabilising methods have been threatened, though now there is POP).

We trust and pray that we will have another leader, who will follow Mandela's example to unite the country despite political and language differences... As many mainstream media have already said, 'Let's give the new national leadership a chance. Nelson was given a chance and he formed a rainbow nation and a world of followers!'

Till next time, keep happy and well!

Bev  
The Editor

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# WORD PUZZLE RESULT

**WORD PUZZLE RESULT:**  
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## QUOTATIONS - To Live By

"If we don't like what's happening to us in the world, all we have to do is change our consciousness - and the world out there changes for us!" - Lester Levenson  
"A grateful mind is a great mind which eventually attracts great things" - Plato

## Spiritual Thanksgiving

○ Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: Psalms 107:1  
This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.  
○ Give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: Psalms 65:4, he, 7-13; 71:6-24, 29  
The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. Psalms 145:9  
\*Let us come before His presence with

thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.  
\*For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" - Psalms 95: 2, 7

\*He turned the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs.  
And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

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Bar - AA Humansdorp 7:00pm  
Tuesday - AA St. Francis Bay 8:30pm  
Friday - NA Jeffrey's Bay 8:30pm  
Please call 083-411-8126 or 079-826-6845 for details

With the increase of drug and alcohol abuse in Kouga, we hope that these meetings will offer hope to those who are suffering from the disease of addiction and their loved ones too.

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings - Mon & Tues. Narcotics Anonymous Meetings - Thurs. Call or SMS 082-064-3711 / 083-411-8126 for more information.