

## **The Klip Riviersberg Nature Reserve, The Early Days.**

**Compiled by René de Villiers.**

### **Proclamation of The Reserve**

The Klip Riviersberg Nature Reserve, or the reserve for short, has always had a special place in the hearts and minds of the people living along its borders and is safe to say that most of the residents in Mondeor feel that way about it. It was certainly the case in the early days of the reserve, and I count myself among them. Since the very early days the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association (KNRA) had been arranging guided walks in the reserve, and with the modest finances at its disposal strove to keep alien vegetation in check, combat fires, arrange guided walks and bring the reserve to the attention of the greater Johannesburg and the rest of the country. One of its earliest projects was to lobby, successfully, for the formal proclamation of the area as a nature reserve. For the record, it was proclaimed on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1984 in terms of section 14 of the Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ordinance 12 of 1983); Administrator's Notice 1827. It comprises Erf 49 Alan Manor, Erf 1472 Mondeor, Erf 1353 Kibler Park and Ptn 14 of the Farm Rietvlei 101. All of these erven belong to the (then) Johannesburg City Council Parks and Recreation Department. Portion 17 of the farm Rietvlei 101 which falls within the fenced borders of the reserve, belongs to the University of the Witwatersrand. In all its endeavours the KNRA has done a sterling job and we owe a large debt of gratitude to those early pioneering committees and members in general.

### **The road-through-the-reserve**

A recurring feature and threat to the reserve, again especially so in the early days, was the mooted building of a road through the reserve – a controversy which, in time, became known as the Peggy Vera Road issue. It was this matter which perked my interest from the very beginning - I could simply not comprehend why anyone would want to scar this green jewel of the south, our long suffering south, by constructing a road right through it. The Peggy Vera Road issue cropped up from time to time and would then in between times go quiet, only to flare up again. This whole thing spanned a period of more than a decade, or even longer. What I am about to relate gives a broad brush view of the history, and I trust I will be forgiven if at times I get my dates or the sequence of events slightly wrong, or if I omit the names of people who played significant roles over the years. But the broad thrust of events is certainly accurate and illustrate the intensity of this threat to the reserve over many years. And, sadly, it is my prediction, that the threat is still with us.

### **Political environment**

Before getting into the specifics of some of the chapters of the drama, I need to sketch the then prevalent political situation in Johannesburg during which some of the most dramatic events occurred. At the time Johannesburg, which excluded Randburg, had, if memory serves, 47 Wards. [Some years later, again if memory serves, the number was increased to some 50 wards]. Whilst the National Party ruled the country, it did not have a majority of seats on the Johannesburg City Council. (shades of Cape Town?). But, crucially, nor did any other political party. The Progressive Federal Party (PFP) got close - it held 23 seats. But not a majority. The National Party, if I remember correctly, held about 18 wards. A group of independents, known as The Independent Ratepayers, if I remember correctly, held five Wards. The NP, in coalition with the Independent Ratepayers thus also held 23 seats. The remaining Ward was held by a representative of the

Southern Johannesburg Ratepayers Federation, namely one Koos Sadie. He was the councillor for ward 47, which in essence meant Meredale.

In practical terms this set-up meant that the Independent Ratepayers held the balance of power in Council. It is virtually impossible for a party whip to get all his constituents to attend all meetings, or even a specific important meeting. This certainly applied to the PFP at the time. The Independent Ratepayers were led by one Francois Oberholzer (Obie for short), himself a boykie from the south. Oberholzer in his time was a formidable figure and did great things for the City, and was Mayor at least once. He thus earned the title of Alderman. The older generation may well remember Francois Oberholzer and if his name sounds vaguely familiar to especially the younger set among you, it may be because you saw his name next to one of our major motor ways, namely the M2/M1. Next time you approach the city on the M2 from the Geldenhuys Interchange over in east, look out for the large blue board with white writing on the left proclaiming the road you are on as the Francois Oberholzer Freeway. The sign is located just where the Kazerne off ramp splits off to the left, and just under the then Harrow Road (now Joe Slovo) overpass. But above all Francois Oberholzer was a politician. He was also Chairman of the City's Management Committee. Two examples will serve to illustrate the importance of the impact of the Independent Ratepayers. Firstly, the City budget could not be approved without their agreement. Brinkmanship became a feature of City politics and it was not uncommon for the budget to, eventually, after many informal deals, be approved a minute before midnight, failing which the City would have ground to a legal standstill the next morning. Newspapers at the time reported on this all the time. Another example: The way I understood things was that although an application for a re-zoning had to be approved by a full meeting of the Council, an application for the proclamation/establishment of a township could be approved by the Management Committee. Which, in practical terms meant Mr Oberholzer. And if you think that is of academic interest, think again. If you, for example, wanted to have your residential property re-zoned as part business, your application did the full rounds in Council, and was tabled at a regular monthly meeting of all 47 Ward Councillors. However, the South Gate shopping centre stands on land that used to be zoned mining. It was proclaimed as two townships namely South Gate Ext 1 and South Gate Ext 2. Guess who approved the proclamation/establishment of these townships at Council level, without the issue ever going to Council. To be sure, the Administrator had to formally approve the township establishment. Furthermore, the actual plans and structures etc etc had to be applied for and ended up being debated and finally approved, with amendments, by the Townships Tribunal (a three day meeting held at the Rand Mines premises near Edgardale) – but by then the two townships were long time in place. It would be an understatement to say that, politically, things were tense around Johannesburg.

### **The first petition**

At the time it was highly fashionable to buy property in one of the up-and-coming northern suburbs such as Berrario and Bordeaux. The right address was important, and the south did not qualify. The New South was largely unknown. But when, moving to the Big City from the platteland at the end of 1969, we first saw Mondeor, we knew this was the place for us. There were large swathes of unspoilt nature and no "little boxes on the hillside, little boxes made of ticky-tack, and they all look the same" as a popular song of the time lamented. My first house was in Ordingley Road, opposite the pedestrian gate of Dalmondeor Laerskool. The street was not tarred, and remained so for some years. We had no telephone. There were no busses. Septic tank systems along with the Peri-Urban Areas Board had just been phased out. But we had an unimpeded view south with the Mondeor Koppies coming together at Silent Pool.

When Chris Nothling, a neighbour brought along a petition at the beginning of 1979 to object against the building of a road through the reserve, I signed immediately. I was flabbergasted that anyone could even think of putting a road in the reserve; after all, we all knew that the reserve was poised to being formally declared as a Nature Reserve. The petition turned out to be the one organised by J B le Roux Smith (Ben Smith) who lived in Fairway. The petition was supported by a separate letter from Mr FJ de Kock, Headmaster of Mondeor Primary School addressed to the City Engineer. In the event more than 1 000 people signed the Smith petition which he presented to Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1979.

I thought that was the end of it, but the thing raised its head again shortly thereafter. By then a few basic principles had become crystallised for me. Firstly, the reserve is not only large, it is also permanent. It will be around long after we are gone, and it is our duty to preserve it for generations to come. If we don't do it, no one else will. Secondly, in dealing with the reserve, one is dealing with bureaucracy. To the bureaucrat it is a job. Every new one on the job may have a few ideas which he thinks are new, but by and large everything has been thought of before. This means in dealing with these (often new) guys you have to be more tenacious than a bull terrier – you can never, never let go. Thirdly, it is mostly an emotional matter, rather than a financial one. Once a thing is on a budget schedule of any sort, it stays there and sooner or later funds become available. Fourthly, one needed a macro approach to the reserve. This meant that the potential impact of developments remote from the reserve had to be kept in mind at all times. Finally, the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association – with all due respect- is to some degree beholden to the City Council and as a result it cannot, indeed, should, not, be confrontational to the Council. Adversarial stances had to be left to extra-curricular players.

#### **One issue : a macro view**

The Peggy Vera Road issue can, purely for purposes of presentation, conveniently be divided into developments to the south of Columbine Avenue, and those north of Columbine Avenue. Some would say that these are, indeed two unrelated issues, but bearing in mind the macro approach I referred to, to me it has always been one and the same, namely an attack on the reserve. Over the time I was involved with the Peggy Vera Road issue, developments south of Columbine started first and kept on longest, and I will thus deal with those first.

#### **Peggy Vera Road, south of Columbine Avenue**

The City Secretary's response (March 1980) to Ben Smith's petition was that it had been decided that the road would no longer be an extension of Peggy Vera/Fairway, but would follow the course of the stream, through Erf 1460, which was a park, and which belonged to Council. As such there would be no steep cuttings, private residential properties would not be affected, and it would link up directly with Ormonde Drive. Noise would also not be a problem. In the City Secretary's opinion Ben's petition thus fell away. Ben left the matter there.

In the meantime we had moved house, and from December 1984 have lived in Edward Place, with our back fence backing on to the reserve just below what is known as Dassie Koppie. If the road had gone ahead, "my" side of the reserve would have become a portion of some 15% of the total area of the reserve. Mindful of how that part of the reserve which is now the Virigin Active Gym on the east side of Kliprivier Road became isolated from and, in time lost, to the reserve, my concern with keeping the reserve intact escalated dramatically.

## **More petitions**

Ben Smith, in July 1985, became aware that moves were again afoot to agitate for Peggy Vera Road to be extended so as to join up with Fairway Road. People in Kibler Park felt that they were cut off from Mondeor and its facilities such as a medical centre, shops and schools. A link would unify the two communities. Ben Smith addressed a letter to Francois Oberholzer, Chairman of the Management Committee, pointing out that the road was, in fact, not a proclaimed road, and that it would cost a lot more than the R500 000,00 which had been set aside for its construction. He pointed out that a fire station was being planned in Impala road (easy access to Kibler Park) and that measured from the shops in Kibler Park to the shops in Mondeor, a new road would not be much shorter than existing roads. He attached a three page report from civil engineer C Louw, which pointed out that in view of the narrowness of existing urban roads, and approach angles etc the building of the proposed road was ill-considered. He was just in time, for the minutes of a meeting of The Parks Residents Association (that being Kibler Park, Rispark and Mayfield Park) held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1985 recorded its Chairman, Dave Crawford, as stating that a petition with 1 262 names “for” the road had been submitted to the Management Committee, via the Transportation Committee. During August 1985 the Southern Courier (which has since morphed into the Comaro Chronicle as far as Mondeor and environs are concerned) published letters from myself and Mr WGL Janse Van Rensburg (National Party Councillor for Ward 46 which included both Mondeor and Kibler Park), each of us plugging our own point of view. I copied a lot of organisations such as the SA Nature Foundation, Braamfontein Spruit Trust, SA Hiking Club, Wild Life Society and The Star. Many of these people in time responded and promised their support for our cause. Clearly stirring up things was having an effect. The Parks’ next meeting was scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> September 1985, and I attended.

And what a boisterous meeting it was. It was attended by Willie van Rensburg and by Andre Fourie, National Party Member of Parliament for Turffontein. Willie van Rensburg lived in Hulda Street, just off Peggy Vera Road, and his kids went to school at Dalmondeor Laerskool. He openly stated that he was in favour of the road, and invited people to send him letters and petitions and that he would usher them through Council. It so happened that I knew Andre Fourie socially. He had the distinction of having been, at the age of 29, the youngest ever elected member of Parliament (for the old South African Party – at the time colloquially referred to as “die Sappe” ). Tempers became ragged, and it was pointed out to me, in no uncertain terms, that not being a resident of The Parks, I had no right to be present. Although the Chairman allowed me to remain seated, he ruled that I would not be given an opportunity to address the meeting. Andre Fourie called for order. He noted that there had been substantial petitions from both sides. He appealed to everyone to abide by the integrity and impartiality of City Officials. In a follow-up letter I demanded that Willie van Rensburg demonstrate his impartiality by attending other ratepayers meetings and invite people to send him letters against the road. He never replied.

## **COCCOS Trails**

Also during August 1985 The Southern Courier reported on the opening of the COCCOS (Co-ordinating Committee for Community Open Spaces) hiking trails in the Reserve were to be officially opened on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 1985. James Clarke published a full page colour feature on the event in The Star of 28<sup>th</sup> August 1985. Mr Clive James of the City Council Planning Department outlined the programme which apart from the official opening ceremony, would include a braai and refreshments for visitors, and tree planting and clean-up activities. Busses were laid on from various points. The names of the various trails to be opened were: Year of the Youth; Stonewall Ruins; Monument; Bloubos Trail; Prospectors; River Walk

and the Koos Sadie Trail. Dr Rob Reid, Chairman of the KNRA went on record that the Association accepted the necessity for the road. He was glad that it would no longer follow the river course. Rather than fight it, the Association would try to influence its final form. He hoped that disruption during construction, which was to include a tunnel/underpass for animals would be minimised.

### **Formation of ACT**

In the interim, Ben Smith and I had met and together with Alan Mosley, Mike Bywater and Kobus Francken, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1985, formed the Association Of Concerned Townsfolk (ACT). The aims of ACT were simple: we would do everything we could to stop the road. And once that had been achieved we would disband. We had a formally signed Constitution and everything.

### **Official opening of the Reserve**

The 21<sup>st</sup> September 1985 dawned, and it was a beautiful day. The crowds gathered at the Silent Pool area and proceeded into the reserve from that point. John Freer had prepared a beautiful and insightful KNRA newsletter in June of that year, and copies thereof were distributed to everyone present. It outlined the aims of the KNRA, eg to obtain land in Winchester Hills which was in private hands (but, which later became the high density townhouse development known as Mount Amanzi). He referred to the rich variety of vegetation and highlighted the various trails. He also outlined the old history of the area, which, I think, deserves to be quoted verbatim:

“The reserve is comprised of portions of three old Witwatersrand farms: Vierfontein to the north and the west and later renamed Ormonde, was leased from the Rand Water Board in 1895 by Richard Trower and was later run by his son-in-law, Lewis Latten. In 1936 this farm was offered to the City Council as a Nature Reserve and Resort but tragically this fine opportunity was allowed to pass. In 1943 it was sold to a property developer and a large part of the original farm became Mondeor Township. In 1893 a syndicate was formed to dam the Bloubos Spruit where it passed through a small gorge in the Klipriviersberg. Huge rocks of stone were quarried from the hillside and dropped into the foundations 50 feet deep by 30 feet wide to form a wall which was to be 40 feet high. Work ceased during the Anglo-Boer War and afterwards a re-appraisal showed the scheme to be too costly so it was abandoned. During the Anglo-Boer War a British blockhouse was built on a koppie on Vierfontein and was the scene of several skirmishes. The Trowers were raided several times. Rietvlei to the south and east was started in approximately 1850 by Sarel Marais a Voortrekker from the Cape. After his death the family ran the farm until 1914 when it was sold to Mr Quillam. It was sold to the City Council after the second world war. The farmhouse, waenhuis, orchard and cemetery still exist but have suffered from neglect and vandalism. Olifantsvlei to the south and west. No information is currently available. (If our readers have or can obtain any information concerning the history of the area, we would be grateful to receive contributions. [the KNRA address is then given]”

Another contemporary document includes a photograph taken in the 1920's from the top of Dassie Kop, looking north toward where the Mondeor Recreation Centre and sports fields are today ; not a single house in sight, except the farm house approximately where Dalmondeor Laerskool is today. And there is a delightful quote: “The well from which the Trowers and Lattens drew water by windmill has a thatch roof and is on the corner of Downham and Fernhurst Street. Nearby are the remains of the original irrigation weir”.

Also present on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1985 were the members of ACT. And our supporters. And we had posters. And banners. And petitions. Willie van Rensburg was peeved, and bemoaned the fact that , although it was our good right to protest, we could have held it over to another day. Our opinion, of course was that it was the perfect opportunity to tell people of the impending catastrophe and travesty. Also present on the day was the well-known Molly Seftel. She was astounded at what we had to say. The official opening was to be presided over by Prof Harold G Rudolph, Deputy Mayor, who was present resplendent in his Chain Of Office. Molly immediately took him by the sleeve and dragged him over to where Ben Smith and I were standing and prevailed on him to hear us out. Ben was in top form, and the Professor promised to give the matter his in depth attention. It should be noted that, by November 1988, Prof Rudolph (by then Alderman Rudolph) in a letter to ACT roundly condemned the road.

### **By-election in Ward 47**

Into this heady mix of emotions and verbal slanging came the news of the tragic death of Koos Sadie, Independent Councillor for Ward 47, which event necessitated a by-election which was scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> October 1985. Four candidates were nominated: For the National Party, Theuns Oosthuizen (28); For the Progressive Federal Party, Paul van Zeuner (40); For the Conservative Party, Fred Rundle (54), and for the Southern Johannesburg Ratepayers Federation, JC de Villiers (62) (no relation). Prior to the election the PFP held 23 seats, and the NP/Independent Ratepayers Coalition held 23 seats. If the NP won the by-election it would regain control of the Council via its coalition with the Independents. If the PFP candidate won, it would have outright control of Council. If either Rundle or de Villiers won, they would hold the deciding vote. Clearly this by-election was shaping up to be a big deal, and over the ensuing weeks we were regaled by the Party Big Guns who came to town. For the NP, Pik Botha lead the charge. Harry Schwartz, Shadow Finance Minister appeared for the PFP and Dr Andries Treurnicht weighed in on behalf of the CP. The Meredale and Glenanda Primary School halls became the centre of the universe. And, naturally, the members of ACT would be there to quiz the candidates on their stand on environmental issues in general and the Peggy Vera Road issue in particular. In the event Theuns Oosthuizen won the election. Despite the Big Guns and all the noise, the voter turnout was low, and the effective vote that put him in office was, if memory serves, merely in the high teens. In the meantime, Sam Moss, PFP Clr for Zoo Lake who had somehow met up with Alan Mosley (a member of ACT), declared against the road, and was published as such in The Star of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1985.

### **KNRA changes its stance**

By now, the KNRA had had a change of heart and in a letter which the Southern Courier published on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1985 Dr Rob Reid wrote to Francois Oberholzer that the idea of a road should be finally and permanently abandoned, that the track should be beautified and turned into a cycle track, that the fences should be removed, and that Council should resist any future proposal for a road and use its resources to prevent it. Co-incidentally on the same day, ACT wrote to the KNRA to place on record that it was not its intention to intrude in the KNRA arena, but that it would continue to petition against the road.

### **The Parks get ugly**

It was at this time that The Parks' Residents Association's campaign in support of the road reached its lowest point. It issued a circular which The Southern Courier published on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1985 which was headed: "Let's talk straight and cut out all the bull". Its tenor hinted at desperation, and statements in the following vein were made: "Do these gentlemen think that residents south of Mondeor suffer from some terrible disease..." And : "Using environmental arguments to cover their personal reasons...." And : "A certain Mr Alan Mosley made certain untrue statements recently in The Star newspaper...". As a result Alan Mosley took legal action against Dave Crawford, who in due course published an apology.

### **The Gencor Grant**

John Freer, in the meantime had used his considerable in-house influence at Gencor to secure a grant of R250 000,00 in favour of the reserve. The money would be channelled through the SA Nature Foundation (an Anton Rupert initiative) in tranches of R50 000,00 per year. The funds would be used for the development of hiking trails, an in-depth study on the potential of the reserve, the establishment of an interpretative centre, the clearing of invasive vegetation, improvement of fire controls and the appointment of full time guards to curb poaching, squatting and off-road vehicles. Photographs in the main newspapers in mid-December 1985 show Dr Rob Reid, John Freer, Ted Pavitt (Gencor Chair) and Frans Stroebel (Director of the SA Nature Foundation) posing in the reserve, handing over/receiving the cheque for R250 000,00.

### **ACT widens its approach**

Not having heard from our Ward Councillor, Willie van Rensburg, ACT decided to submit its petition of 1405 signatures direct to the Clerk of the Council, with copies to various councillors, notably Danie van Zyl, Sam Moss, Francois Oberholzer and Ernie Fabel who was Mayor that year. We also sent copies to James Clarke at the Star and to Frans Stroebel, whom I happened to know in another context. Council's response was that our submission would be considered by the Culture and Recreation Committee and the Transportation Committee. The City Engineer was to report on the financial implications on the construction of Peggy Vera Road and any other route from Kibler Park to Mondeor. In May 1986 ACT also wrote to Mr AB Eksteen, Director –General of the Department of Transport. We illustrated that Peggy Vera Road was but a part of a much larger picture and asked him to hold back on financing pending a proper environmental impact assessment. Which he did : he called on the Council to arrange for such a report to be produced.

### **Eskom's power pylons**

At the KNRA annual general meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1986, Dr Rob Reid noted that in the course of the previous year electricity pylons had been erected in the Reserve. He was especially affronted by the fact that this took place without consulting with the KNRA in any way. The first thing the Association knew about it was when the bull dozers moved in. The damage caused by the construction would take years to be reversed. (has anything changed??). Another disturbing note appeared in the September 1986 newsletter : The Council had appointed a firm of consultants to look into the building of the road through the reserve.

### **Consulting firm De Leuw, Cather**

Now started one of those shameful chapters which had over the years been a hallmark of interactions with Council. ACT immediately asked Council for details of the appointment. On 13<sup>th</sup> November 1986 it responded by telling ACT that consultants had, indeed, been appointed. Their brief was to firstly examine

the need/desirability of the link, and if it was found to be so needed, to, as a second phase, examine its alignment. The consultants were also instructed to contact all interested and affected parties. Council did not divulge the name of the consultants. After multiple letters Council eventually, on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1987 informed ACT that the consulting firm was De Leuw, Cather, and that the persons concerned were Messrs Eric Hall and John Marsh. We immediately asked to meet with the consultants so as to afford us an opportunity to present our case against the road. We were given an audience on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1987, and duly presented our case. Things then went quiet as far as De Leuw Cather were concerned – but I will revert to it shortly.

### **One hundred questions**

Following local council elections held in October 1988 ACT sent letters of congratulations to all of the newly-elected councillors, at the same time reminding them of the Peggy Vera Road problem. Quite a few of them responded favourably, especially Councillor Claire Quail, PFP. She invited us to submit questions to her about the road, which she undertook to table at an upcoming monthly Council meeting. Our first set of questions comprised some 100 questions which the Clerk of the Council vetoed as being too long. We revised our list and pared it down to some 50 questions which were duly tabled at an Ordinary Meeting of Council on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1989. Our questions were in the vein of: “How many households are there in every individual suburb bordering on the Reserve? How many households would naturally use ‘the link’ to get to the Klipriviersberg Recreation Centre in Peggy Vera Road? How many households will not use ‘the link’?” And: “Was a traffic study/investigation made? If no, why not? If yes, what were the findings?” And so forth. I was told that our questions kept more than one Council Department busy for days on end. One of the startling findings was that some 2600 households would use the link to get to the Recreation Centre as opposed to some 8600 which would not. And this *excluded* Alberton suburbs, all to the south of the reserve, which would obviously not need the Peggy Vera Link to get to the recreation centre.

### **De Leuw Cather, again**

When, toward the end of 1991, we had not had any feedback on the deLeuw Cather investigations we made further enquiries. We eventually, on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1992 laid our hands on a copy of their first report, only to find that it was dated *February 1987* that being two months prior to our first meeting with Messrs Hall and Marsh. In other words they had already produced their report by the time they met with us to hear our submission. Needless to say they found that there was a need for the link. We called for another meeting which was held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1992. Re-reading the documents of the time, the most surprising thing I find is how deferential we were at our meeting with them. We pointed out various shortcomings in the 1987 report, and how, in our opinion it was superficial in many respects. For example in one of the tables in the report dealing with schools, the Danie Theron Laerskool in Kibler Park was omitted completely. We also pointed out that in the intervening period there had been many developments which rendered the report obsolete. For example Glenvista High School (which we referred to in our original presentation, and which they had completely ignored) had opened its doors in 1988. And later there was the Mulbarton Primary School. The Mulbarton Clinic (later hospital) had started up. Only 2600 out of a total of some 11 000 households would use the link to get to the Recreation Centre. And so forth. In our opinion we were effectively back at square one: the need and desirability for the Peggy Vera Road link still had to be established. We asked that they change their recommendation to one of saying that there was no need for the road, and that the piece of land on which it was to have been constructed be incorporated into the reserve. On 11<sup>th</sup> March 1993 I received an anonymous telephone call from someone who told me that the

second report of deLeuw Cather had been out since January, and that it was being withheld from me. I eventually got a copy of it. In it, they regurgitated that the need and desirability had been established in 1987, and took it from there. At ACT we decided to ignore their second report.

### **The tide turns**

When the SAPS opened a satellite office in Eikenhof during July/August 1995, I wrote a letter to the Southern Courier captioned: "And then there were none", because the last "reason" for the Peggy Vera Road link had, finally, fallen away.

On 14<sup>th</sup> September 1995 I received a letter from Council, which stated, *inter alia* : "This Department does not favour the construction of the Peggy Vera Link, as detailed in the attached letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> March 1994. This department therefore supports the offer to remove the fences separating the two parts of the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve". The attached copy letter which was addressed to The Witwatersrand Heritage Trust, stated, *inter alia* that: "Although there are obviously short term travel savings benefits to the Kibler Park community, this department tends to favour not constructing the link for the following long term reasons.....". And that is where the matter rests for now.

### **Peggy Vera Road north of Columbine Avenue, or the Xavier Road issue**

As stated above, many people are of the opinion that the road network north and south of Columbine Ave are two entirely separate issues. This has never been my view. To me they are merely two sides of the same coin, especially if a long term perspective view is taken. If Peggy Vera Road were to be extended into Mondeor, traffic from the south would sooner or later agitate for a road leading north out of Mondeor. By the same token, were Xavier Road to be extended south into Mondeor, traffic would, in time, agitate for a road to the south. My policy has always been to attack any initiative – and by this I mean even the very smallest sign - which may result in either of these roads being built, even as modest suburban roads or minor tracks, for, once you have a road, it can only get bigger. Roads never disappear.

### **Ratepayers Associations**

Whereas our/my agitation against Peggy Vera Road proper was conducted via the Association of Concerned Townsfolk (ACT), resistance against Xavier Road was conducted via the Mondeor Ratepayers Association, and the Southern Johannesburg Ratepayers Federation. For many years Ken Giese was one of the most prominent persons in the ratepayers movement in the south of Johannesburg. Ken Giese is a long-time resident of the south and was, at one point, a member of the Johannesburg City Council for the old United Party (Sappe). For many years, he had, however, lamented the fact that community affairs had become totally politicized. He was a great supporter of the SJRF candidate, Mr JC de Villiers who had stood for election in the by-election following the death of Koos Sadie.

The Xavier Road question was on the agenda of meeting of the Mondeor Ratepayers Association which was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1986. The following points were noted: For many years the Uncle Charlie's crossing had been a huge bottleneck, tying up traffic for miles from all directions. And for years one newspaper article after another reported on how the new Uncle Charlie's intersection was destined to be the largest, the most

elaborate, intersection in South Africa, if not in the southern hemisphere. When the ring road system around Johannesburg began to take shape it became apparent the Uncle Charlie's would not be an intersection at all. Instead it turned out to be nearly entirely sidelined. Instead, there would be the Ridgeway Interchange, which itself was merely a series of intersections with inadequate access and egress. For example, south-bound traffic on the M1/K101 would not have access to the N13 (later re-named the N12) east. Furthermore, traffic from the south (eg Vereeniging/Orange Farm/The Lido) would not have access to the N13 east or west. Soweto-bound traffic from the north would not have a clover leaf exit, but a mere exit with a robot. In addition the Xavier bridge over the N13 turned out to be a five-lane affair. On top of which it was the southern tip of a metropolitan route which started at Church Street in Mayfair via Crownwood Road and which in many parts was a five and four lane road. On top of which again, it was planned to extend Xavier into Mondeor in which was quaintly called a "sinusoidal curve". It did not take a genius to see that traffic from the Lido and further south would use Columbine Avenue, turn north at Ormonde/Royal Park, and use Fernhurst Road and Xavier Road to get access to the N13 freeway. It was noted that quarry trucks were already using Columbine Avenue as a main east/west thoroughfare. And they were routinely dropping clumps of stone aggregate as they went along. The meeting resolved to oppose the extension of Xavier Road south into Mondeor. And to start this campaign with effect from its AGM which was to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1986.

### **The Mondeor Ratepayers Association AGM of March 1986**

In preparation of the meeting a variety of posters were printed and displayed on telephone poles. Copies were also placed at the various shopping centres, like the Mondeor Spar which at the time was a modest shop. Posters read: "4 LANE HI-WAY TO BISECT MONDEOR?" ; "TRANQUILITY RIP"; "GOODBYE OXYGEN, HELLO CARBON MONOXIDE"; "MONDEOR OR MONDEROAR?". The result was overwhelming and 500 plus enthusiastic residents crowded into the Mondeor Civic Centre. Richard Freeman illustrated the beauty of the spruit along Fernhurst Road by way of a slide show. Betty Pienaar gave a talk on the variety of bird life and trees along the route of the intended road. All of these would be lost were a four lane road to be built into Mondeor. The key-note address was made by myself. I reviewed the N13/N12 southern by-pass which was in the process of being constructed as well as the ancillary roads and their potential effect on Mondeor. Councillor Willie van Rensburg was present and he promised his support to stop Xavier Road's extension into Mondeor.

### **Letters to the press**

A response came from an unexpected quarter, namely from Alderman Cecil Long, Chairman of the Health and Environmental Committee, and as far as I can recall, National Party Councillor for Ward 45 (Robertsham). His letter captioned "The Road That Never Was" was published in the Southern Courier on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1986. Members of the Mondeor Ratepayers Association arranged a trip with reporters from the Courier which took place on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1986. The inevitable impact of the road – if allowed to proceed - was clearly demonstrated, and the Southern Courier published the Association's rebuttal on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1986. That letter pointed out that Alderman Long had failed to take a long term view of the issue. A presentation was arranged at the Giese residence on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1986, attended by Andre Fourie, Cecil Long, Willie van Rensburg, Ken Giese and myself. I pointed to the fact that there were two residential suburbs between the N13 freeway and Mondeor, namely Winchester Hills Extensions 3 and 2. Extension 3 had been proclaimed with a road reserve between 55 and 40 metres for the construction of Xavier Road's extension. Extension 2, which had not as yet been proclaimed showed a proposed road reserve of between 40 and 37 metres. A

road reserve of that magnitude pointed to a four lane road. Plus, properties along the road reserve would not have direct access to the road – a further indication that the road was intended for high volumes of traffic. The only basis on which the Residents Association would agree to a road was that the proclaimed reserve be reduced to that of a two lane road, with direct access to the road from the properties along its entire course.

### **Mondeor High School's Enviro Club**

The tumultuous events of 1986 would not be complete without reference to the role of the Enviro Club at Mondeor High School, under the enthusiastic guidance of Marion van der Walt. In a 20 page report captioned "To be, or not to be", the Enviro Club examined the potential impact of roads both north and south of Columbine Avenue from all angles. They consulted widely, notably with the KNRA, with the City Engineer, and with Councillor Willie van Rensburg. I was invited to present a paper on the issue, which caused Alderman Long to storm around, accusing me of poisoning the young minds of school children. Their eventual conclusion and stance was that these roads should be opposed. Their report enjoyed wide exposure: an article in the Southern Courier of 18<sup>th</sup> September 1986 stated: "The Mondeor High School has won the Civic Awareness Presentation during last week's finals of the Enviro 86 Competition held at the Oppenheimer Life Science Building of the University of the Witwatersrand". An accompanying photograph showed the trophy and proud members of the Club, namely: Mandy Smith, Liesl Owen, Marily Mumford, Nicole Pacheo, Mrs Elaine Powell, David King, Linda Bowen, Marc Quadling, Henley Quadling, Lara Guthrie, Carmen Pacheo, Lindsay Payne, Oonagh Popkin, Barrel Phillips and Mrs Marion van der Walt.

### **Department of Transport, Pretoria**

With the backing of Andre Fourie, MP, the Mondeor Ratepayers Association on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1986 requested a meeting with the Mr AB Eksteen, Director-General of Transport, which meeting was arranged for 13<sup>th</sup> January 1987. In addition to the MP, the chairmen of the ratepayers associations in Meredale, Kibler Park, Alan Manor, Walkerville and of course Mondeor were invited to attend. I was deputised to put the ratepayers' case to the meeting, asking for the various slipways and loops at the Ridgeway Interchange referred to before. Reference was also made to the view of the Minister of Transport, Mr Hendrik Schoeman (in 1983) that urban and freeway traffic were in essence different and could not be mixed. The Ratepayers pointed out that traffic volumes on freeways often slowed traffic to a snail's pace, and the Ridgeway Interchange should, by rights, have been designed as being part of an urban network: meaning that the various suggested loops and slipways were very much appropriate for the locality. The very tight Voortrekker Road off ramp from the N13 at Alberton was good example of what the Ratepayers were talking about. The distinction between urban and freeway traffic was one to be found solely on paper on some bureaucrat's desk in Pretoria. On 29<sup>th</sup> April 1987 the (new) Director of Transport Mr RG Meyer (no, not Roelf of Constitution fame), in a letter turned us down flat. Not a single loop or slipway we motivated for would be acceded to. As far as the threat of the Xavier Road end in Mondeor was concerned, we would have to take it up with our local Councillors. And here is another shameful incident: in the course of the Southgate saga we discovered a letter dated 1980 in which DoT had given its blessing for four entrances to that shopping centre from Rifle Range Road. Some of the slipways we wanted were on the very Southgate land. So, when we made our presentation in January 1987 the DoT people around the table knew that the land was not available, but chose not to tell us about it at all.

### **Southgate Shopping Centre**

Which brings us to the Southgate Saga. The Townships Board hearing on this centre was held at the Rand Mines Properties complex near Edgardale on 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1987. There were some 5 or 6 objectors, one of which was the Southern Johannesburg Ratepayers Federation. The minutes of the hearing runs into thousands of pages. Matters of importance to the KNRA and Ratepayers were the following: Firstly, the project was approved subject to *inter alia* "the provision of new culverts and that water runoff would be led to the nearest public stream". This was an extremely sensitive point because properties all along the banks of all the tributaries of the Bloubosspruit and all the way to Silver Lane had been plagued with floods. The Southgate site would, over night, add a massive 25 hectares of catchment area. Council was clearly out of touch with and impervious to the plight of residents. In fact, the bridge in Ormonde Drive near Silent Pool had to be raised to accommodate the volume of water. Secondly, it had become clear that central government was deaf to residents' appeals for an improved road network. The third point concerned major shopping centres in the south. It was generally accepted that the New South (ie south of Rifle Range Road), needed an upmarket shopping centre. To great fanfare, Clr Linda Lewis (NP) had announced that approval had been obtained from the Administrator for the establishment of a 80 000 sqm shopping centre at Liefde-en-Vrede near the (then) Panorama drive in theatre, south along Klipriver Road past the Rand Water Board head office. Apart from the actual facility, residents liked the idea because shoppers would use Klipriver Road, and thus not seek a north/south road through Mondeor. In its submission the applicant also stated that they had information that a township for coloured people was being planned at Liefde-en-Vrede. This, too, was a sensitive issue at the time. By this time judge Richard Goldstone had delivered his landmark ruling on segregated suburbs, and there were expectations that the Group Areas Act was to be repealed (it happened in 1991). "Grey areas" was a topical subject. The Ratepayers were determined to fight the roads and water issues and although it was an apolitical movement, to inform residents of the statements made in the Southgate application regarding the Liefde-en-Vrede site.

### **Mondeor Ratepayers Association's AGM of 1987**

By then it was again time for a Mondeor Ratepayers AGM. This was scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> August 1987, but there was some technicality about the booking of the Civic Centre hall, and it had to be postponed to 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1987. All of the aforementioned issues were on the agenda, and posters heralding the various topics were put up throughout the south. This time the council was ready for us. Some technicalities regarding our posters resulted in them being torn down and trampled in the dust by very obliging members of the then equivalent of the metro police. As soon as posters went up they were torn down again. The intersection of Columbine/Ormonde at the pharmacy was a favourite spot for this activity. The AGM eventually went ahead, and all of the above issues were duly raised. By then we had also heard that Linda Lewis' 80 000 sqm had been downsized to 20 000 sqm. Alderman Cecil Long was in attendance and in fine form charging up and down the aisles in a near-apoplectic state screaming at me that I was a liar : conduct unbecoming an Alderman, which was pointed out in subsequent correspondence in the press. Jan Burger, a senior NP councillor read out a letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1987 from the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, to the effect that the Department had received no requests for the development of any township at the Liefde-en-Vrede site, for any population group.

### **The Johannesburg City Council hits back**

The Johannesburg City Council then took the unprecedented step of calling an "information meeting" to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1987 under the Chairmanship of Francois Oberholzer, a meeting intended to set matters straight. If Council had thought the meeting would be a doddle, with the local yokels hanging on

their every word, they were sadly mistaken. We were ready for them, and handed out a comprehensive series of questions, including a set of questions directed at Alderman Long personally, which urgently needed to be answered. Francois Oberholzer was clearly piqued, and complained about the “avalanche of paper” with which the Ratepayers flooded the meeting. Senior Council officials who were in attendance were challenged to explain about the road, and were shamefacedly obliged to admit that a four lane road could, indeed, be built on the road reserve set aside for it. When Francois Oberholzer offered to block off the road if that was what people wanted he was greeted by a chanting crowd demanding “Block it off! , Block it off!”. Also, clearly peeved that instead of protesting in the way we did Oberholzer said that we should have approached our local Councillors to bring our needs, desires and concerns to the fore (as if we had not tried). Coen Deetlefs, a long-time resident from Meredale wagged his finger at him and told him : “Listen here, Oberholzer, what you saw here today is democracy in action”. Council promised to, within fourteen days provide written answers to all the questions submitted to them.

Council did respond, in a letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 1987, which was only circulated three weeks later, and also not to all residents. And certainly not direct to any person in the Ratepayers movement. It is worth quoting parts of that letter verbatim: “As a result of representations made the Management Committee at a meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1987 resolved that Council will not proceed with the extension southwards of Xavier Street in Winchester Hills Ext 3 as this is found to be unnecessary to provide access streets to serve the new suburbs in Winchester Hills”. And: “In order to provide access to stands in Winchester Hills Ext 3 and the proposed township of Winchester Hills Ext 2 the remaining section of Swartgoud Street will be constructed. Thus in Winchester Hills Ext 3, Marula Crescent will obtain access from Xavier Street. In the proposed township of Winchester Hills Ext 2 all local streets will obtain access directly or indirectly from Swartgoud and Nossob Streets”. And: “Most of the written questions fall away”.

### **Many issues remain unresolved**

The Mondeor Ratepayers responded in a letter of 4<sup>th</sup> December 1987 that most of the questions posed had gone unanswered, that the map Council had included with its letter was inaccurate, and that in general Council’s response had been totally unsatisfactory. Council never responded. But at least the Ratepayers had a letter and a map which, as far as Xavier Road was concerned, stated: “Blocked off”. There was one further flurry of excitement in January 1997: an application had been lodged to re-zone erven 1582 up to and including 1586, erf 1590 and erf 1603 and a part of Delphinium Street in Winchester Hills Ext 2. The effect of this would have been that south-bound traffic in Xavier Street would have been indirectly channelled to Fernhurst Road. The KNRA, at the time under the Chairmanship of Les Sawyers duly objected and the potential disaster was averted. And that is where the matter rests at the time of writing, February 2015.

### **Toll roads, 1988- style**

One last historical note: This concerns toll roads, a topic which at the time of writing is a hot button item. Not many people know that over the period 1988 to 1989 there was a major controversy regarding a “toll plaza” on the N12 (then known as the N13). Central Government had concluded an agreement with a company called Toll Road Concessions to build a toll plaza on the N13 between Xavier Road and Klip River Road. Of all people, the National Party in the Johannesburg Council took umbrage and objected to the plaza. Alderman Danie van Zyl led the charge. In other words, the National Party Councillors took its own leaders to court. The matter duly ended up in Court and the Johannesburg Council won the case on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1988. National Government, (Transport Commission) applied for leave to appeal the court’s decision, but this

request was refused in court on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1989. Maybe this decision should be used as a basis for an action against SANRAL! **Note:** Alderman Danie Van Zyl has been honoured with a monumental cenotaph in the Westpark cemetery, directly opposite the Garden of Remembrance for the school children who died in the Westdene bus disaster.

### **The land swop**

In June 1998 there was a flurry of letters in the Southern Courier regarding a swop of land affecting the reserve. Part of the reserve to the east of Kliprivier Road (where the gym currently is) had been exchanged for land on the western edge of the Reserve. Brian Holmes felt that the swop had taken place without due consultation and that, generally speaking, it was a bad idea. David Scannel responded by pointing out that the isolated piece of land had for all practical purposes long since ceased to be an integral part of the reserve, and that the acquired property enhanced the reserve, when looked at in greater perspective. An action such as this will always give rise to different interpretations, and the differences of opinion can linger for many years. What is abundantly clear, however, and which in my opinion is the lesson we can learn from this is that if a portion of the reserve is severed from the bulk of it, that portion in time becomes isolated and runs the risk of being sold off. For example, if Peggy Vera road were to be constructed the smaller, western portion of the reserve may become alienated from the larger, eastern portion.

### **The Radio Mast**

During 2007 and 2008 there was a real threat that a SAPS radio mast would be erected on one of the most prominent hills in the reserve. The KNRA opposed the proposed locality and felt strongly that Johannesburg City Parks had let the Association down. In the end the mast was not erected, thanks to strong objections from the Association. Not having been directly involved with this titanic struggle, I leave it to someone more familiar with the facts to pen the history.

### **Development plans for the Klip Riviersberg Area, including the Nature Reserve**

Development plans for the area are nothing new, and these invariably affect the reserve in some way. In addition, over the years there have been specific plans put forward at “developing” the reserve *per se*. It is nearly as if each new generation of city official feels obliged to recommend that the reserve and/or its environs be developed in one way or another, often with the view of making the reserve “pay for itself”. To this end, various studies and development plans have been compiled at some considerable cost to the taxpayer. The following come to mind and there may well be others:

1. 1983: Southern Area Development Plan published by The City Engineers Department in February 1983, and apparently an outflow of a plan “.....first presented to the public at a meeting of residents and property owners in 1980”. The map attached to this “Plan” was fraught with inaccuracies, showing existing roads as proposed roads, and *vice versa*. But not consistently so. A sorry piece of administrative bungling. A letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> July 1984 from City Planner PJ Visser stated that “ .....owing to the nature and volume of the comments received regarding this development plan, it has taken over six months to asses and evaluate them. I must also state that the Southern Areas

Development Plan is presently under review and all comments received are now being correlated". Who knows, maybe to this day there is someone somewhere, busy "correlating" all the comments.

2. 1984: COCCOS. Referred to above. This was the original in-house Council initiative of establishing the original hiking trails. In my view, this is the granddaddy blueprint of what the reserve is all about. The "no fires, no picnics, no overnight staying, no motorised traffic,, take-only-pictures-and-leave-only-footprints" philosophy. Wouldst that, that was where it stopped.
3. 1986 to 1993: De Leuw, Cather : See above
4. 1986 to 1987: Xavier Street: See above.
5. 1993: The Walmsley Environmental Consultants Plan. Among other meetings, a public meeting was held in the Mondeor Civic Centre on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1993. Aimed at improved facilities, combined with what was considered to be some sensible suggestions.
6. 1994: The Kilp River Area Development Options Study. A draft final report of some 88 pages dated December 1994 was compiled by De Swardt&Duys, Town and Regional Planners for its client, the Central Witwatersrand Regional Services Council.
7. 1997: The Brian Roberts traffic count of June 1997. Somewhat remote from the reserve, it looked at traffic volumes at Xavier Street.
8. 1999: PlanPractice Town Planners. Conservation Policy for Klipriviersberg: a discussion session scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> September 1999, and an invitation to attend a presentation and meeting on the Local Integrated Development Plan (LIDP) for Klipriviersberg Area on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1999. I also have a letter on file dated January 1999 from EnviroPractice along the same lines as above, but am not sure if there was a connection between these. After attending these meetings, The Financial Mail published my letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1999 in which I conclude: "For as long as the mere existence of the reserve and its tranquil environs remains offensive to developers the people of Greater Johannesburg will have to remain especially vigilant".
9. 2000: Two separate happenings, both concerned with the LIDP process. Firstly, the Southern Metropolitan Local Council's LIDP process initiated by Dr Diane Mayne. A public meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2000, followed by a Community Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2000 to discuss the "Draft Klipriviersberg Policy", a document of some 100 pages. The LIDP would compartmentalize the greater area in zones, each with its own rules regarding developments (eg buildings) within those zones. Zone borders were to be determined by the then prevailing traffic patterns, with scant attention given to the fact that these may change in time. For example, The Glen Shopping Centre traffic determined just about everything in the greater area. Mondeor was neatly severed from the reserve which could have resulted in, for example, a ten-storey hotel on the very border of the reserve. Secondly, the GAPP Architects& Urban Designs LIDP Public Participation Meeting held at Mondeor High School on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2000. In my letter of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2000 I criticised the GAPP director Mr E Wood on the paucity of his presentation, which in turn elicited a caustic response from him on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2000. My follow-up letter of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2000 remained unanswered.
10. Still in 2000: The AE Strategic Community Development Information Meeting held in December 2000. The names Tony Rippon and Pierre Joubert are on record, but I have nothing further on this initiative.
11. 2001: The upgrading of the sewer line through Mondeor and the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve. A letter of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2001 from L&W Environmental is on file.
12. 2005: The Petronet (a division of Transnet) pipeline network. The Bohleki Environmental (Pty) Ltd Focus Group Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2005 plus various follow-up meetings under the

chairmanship of Clr Dot Corrigan (nee Gardner) (Ward 54), at the Council's offices in Springfield (near Wemmer Pan). Petronet had proposed to lay an oil pipeline through the Reserve, but following intensive discussions with them, Dot, assisted by Dave Barclay (Mondeor resident) an alternative course outside the borders of the Reserve was agreed upon.

13. 2006: The Gate Precinct. The application for this included an application to be absolved from having to submit an EIA which the Act requires. I objected to both the sought after exemption and the application *per se*. My view, which I still have, is that the Gate Precinct was an unnecessary duplication of perfectly suitable facilities in the Recreation Centre some 200 metres further down Peggy Vera Road. The MEC, Mr Khabisi Mosunkutu's (over whose name there were some question marks at the time) decision to waive the need for an EIA was particularly galling
14. 2006: Klipriviersberg Urban Development Framework. A report of some 100 pages prepared by Setplan (full name Settlement Planning and Dlodla Urban Planning Specialists); in association with Themba (Engineering Specialists), Urban Studies (Urban economists) and Bohlweki (Environmental Specialists). Their findings, *inter alia* were: "Development will need to be restricted to areas that do not negatively affect the environment", and : "Environmental controls are needed to protect the environmentally sensitive areas, which form a large part of the study area. In particular, the river basin, catchment areas, wetlands, vegetation and ridges"
15. 2007: The NEMAI Consultants Master Plan for the Reserve. Opposed by many. I paid for and published a full page open letter in the Southern Courier on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007 criticising the plan and the report. Nothing came of it.

### **Some concluding cautionary remarks**

Xavier Street: Council's assurance that Xavier Street is "blocked off", does not mean that will be the case for all time. The current Council will not consider itself bound by the decisions of its predecessors. Sooner or later a developer will build on that rocky hill south of where Xavier currently stops. If (when?) that happens, one would again need to agitate that it be a two-lane road reserve with properties having direct access to it, as is the case with Swartgoud Road south of President Hoerskool.

Peggy Vera Road: JCP&Z says that the Reserve is currently being re-proclaimed. They are vague on details as to why and how. Find out exactly why, and what the intended reserve will look like as regards borders AND land use. Ideally, all the various erven should be consolidated in one stand/erf and should be zoned "park". And, definitely, the old Peggy Vera Road "reserve" inside the nature reserve MUST be incorporated into the reserve. There must be no difference in the land use of that strip and the rest of the reserve.

Development Plans: Sooner or later, and perhaps sooner, someone at JCP&Z is going to trot out the old chestnut that the Reserve should be "self sustaining" and that "eco-tourism" should be promoted, usually by providing overnight facilities inside the Reserve. Combat this with a combination of the following: (i) Oblige Eskom to pay for the privilege – not the right- of having a servitude in the Reserve. They must pay on an ongoing basis, and for every time they come on to the property, and NOT in motorised vehicles. (ii) Oblige City Health, or whoever, to pay for the privilege to have a sewerage pipe line through the Reserve. (iii) The KNR is not Roodepoort or Kirstenbosch. It is not a garden. It is an unique unspoilt reserve without paved walkways. (iv) Point out how derelict the buildings at Emmarentia have become. They have become run-down slums. (v) Are there plans to "develop" Melville Koppies? (vi) Insist on budget as compared to actual financial data for all JCP&Z's parks and reserves as regards (for example) area; number of visitors; number of employees; job designations; size of payroll; gate takings; city subsidy in total and per capita

and/or per square meter. (vii) A park is a park, and it need not pay for itself. I have a quote from Hillary Clinton, no less, to this effect.

**René de Villiers**  
**Mondeor**  
**Johannesburg**

**19<sup>th</sup> February 2015.**

[rdevilliersemail@telkomsa.net](mailto:rdevilliersemail@telkomsa.net)

(Revised)