

## ● MELVILLE NEWS

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Issue No. 6 - July 2009

**The free newsletter aimed at fostering goodwill among residents, merchants and visitors to Melville**

### *Letter from the editor*

It was billed as the best thing to happen to Melville and if one was to judge it by the turnout and the response, it certainly was. Or could be. "It" is Create Melville's Security Initiative launch which seemed to impress everyone there. An inclusive scheme to keep Melville clean, safe and fun is what the community has been screaming for but it still needs the support of many more to reach the 500 mark which will see the concept become a reality.

When I started this newsletter I announced it would contain nothing about crime and grime and by implication that included talk of security. However, as I believe this initiative is 100% positive, it would be remiss of me not to add my voice to theirs to implore everyone who is still vacillating to take action. Information about how to do so is easily accessible via email [createmelville@gmail.com](mailto:createmelville@gmail.com) and phone 076 920 5625.

Other good news - for this writer at least - is that the worst of winter is behind us despite the freezing mornings and nights. Like many in the animal world, I tend to hibernate in the cold and have become something of a pyromaniac courtesy of the best domestic investment made in recent years - a cast iron, closed-system fireplace that not only looks good but is functional beyond expectation.

When not totally mesmerised by the flames, I have observed a change outdoors where already some sweetpeas and a poppy have shown their faces in our garden. As always, Jane Griffiths provides sound advice in this domain, writing here about how to nurture gardeners among your children - just the thing for encroaching spring and summer.

No doubt by the next issue of Melville News, jasmine will be flowering and the scents of the season will abound. I can't wait.

Until then,

*Suzanne Brenner*

#### **IN THIS ISSUE**

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### KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

**Norman Baines** delves into the history of one of Melville's best-known landmarks.

If you give directions in Melville you say "turn right at Mays" or "go past Mays" and everyone understands. Indeed there is no shop in Main Road with a history longer than Mays.

Maurice 'May' Kretzmer started May's Pharmacy in the 1930s where La Vista Social Club used to be in 4th Avenue (*and where Chilli is the new kid on the block - SB*). Vic Gaul (pictured right) lives two streets away in 6th Avenue. On his shelves is a witches' brew which, while not quite including tongue of frog and eye of newt, has compounds containing lead and sulphur, and Camphorated Tincture of Opium, in elegant glass containers the like of which you do not see today.



Vic and three partners bought the pharmacy from Maurice Kretzmer in 1965, and it became Mays Chemist in the building it occupies now. Vic is discreet, but one of the partners was a "character" who would sometimes turn up bleary-eyed after retrieving his roulette wheel from the police, for his other – perhaps major – interest was gambling, not legal at the time.

Vic Gaul's nostalgic shelf collection contains chemicals, powders, and potions which go back to the days when pharmacists would mix a cough syrup or a cold remedy of their own, using delicate scales and precise measurements. Hardly anyone does that now, but Kobus Botma, who owns and runs Mays today says that they still mix remedies prescribed by dermatologists. And opium is not among the ingredients.

Though Mays is thoroughly modern, it still retains a slightly old-fashioned style. Kobus runs a business with 43 employees including three delivery men. Not many places deliver these days, but Kobus feels that it is worthwhile. Mays makes three deliveries a day to the SABC, delivers to the German Old Aged Home, Eeufees Oord, and many other long valued customers. A very elderly gentleman named Maurice Schwegman maintains the motorcycles.

In the dispensary there are three pharmacists whose combined years at Mays add up to almost 100, and Kobus is proud of how long his people have stayed at Mays. He inherited the business from his much loved father Chris, for whom Kobus did his proprietorial apprenticeship at age 12 by unpacking deliveries and working as store man before qualifying as a pharmacist.

Local pharmacies are an endangered species. Big chains run dispensaries as "loss leaders", relying on "front shop" distractions to make profits. Government restrictions and government dithering have made the business uncertain, and a final decision on dispensing fees is still to come but Kobus is steadfast.

Not only does Mays go far back in Melville's history, but the Botma family goes very far back in white South African history. Steven Jansz Botma (1618-1700) was one of the first *vryburgers* to be granted land beside the Liesbeeck river by Jan van Riebeeck, and you can't go further back than that.

So whatever developments lie ahead in Melville, Kobus reassures that one thing will not change - Mays is here to stay.

### IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

*Inspired by Melville News' feature about Bill Craig in our previous issue, Cape Town based former resident **Mariada Goosen** recalls a shopping expedition of old.*

It was that time of the year.

A change of season signalled a change of clothes for my daughter. There was only one place to take a teenager on the prowl, Bill Craig's *emporium of 1000 pairs of trousers*. Shopping not being top of my list of priorities, I inveigled Terry Bloom (of the original Graphiti) to accompany Nikki and me. I believed that as Terry's senior by some years, I would be less adept in aiding Nikki in her choice.

Relief was provided by Bill's embracing leather couch and a steaming cup of coffee. Thankful that I could relax, I settled into bliss whilst they proceeded to spend my money.

Then I realised I was being carefully observed. I looked up into the twinkling eyes and charming face of an impeccably dressed, unknown gentleman. He lightly doffed his hat and I offered my hand in greeting, which he elegantly and lightly touched to his lips - my utter delight at this old-world charm evident on my face.

He said, "Good morning *Madame*, would it be suitable for me to compliment you?" I was hooked and smiled from ear to ear. "You, your daughter and your granddaughter, are the most beautiful women



I have ever seen." I smiled and thanked him.

As he left, Bill looked bewildered when all hell broke loose in the form of a shriek of fury. Terry's dismay at the thought of being old enough to be Nikki's mother was clearly evident. And the grandmother label was never mentioned.



### GARDENING WITH CHILDREN

*Jane Griffiths leads your children up the garden path.*

To be a good gardener you need to be curious, like to learn by observing and enjoy playing in the dirt – no wonder gardening is perfect for children!

Children are also intrigued by goggas and earthworms; they love playing with water and are fascinated by the magical process of taking a handful of seeds and turning it into an edible garden. By spending time in your garden with your child, you will be cultivating a life-long love of gardening and nature.



A few tips for gardening with children:

- Create an area specifically for them;
- Choose a sunny spot with water nearby, that is easily accessible and can be admired by friends;
- Keep your child's garden small otherwise it will soon become unmanageable. If you are in a flat or have a small garden, your child can grow vegetables in containers;
- One of the greatest hazards in your child's garden is his or her own curiosity. Many a plant has been killed because it's been dug up to see if it is growing. Your child needs to understand that the roots of a plant are multi-functional - as an anchor, holding the plant firmly in position so it doesn't fall over; as a straw which the plant uses to suck up water and as the plant's mouth through which it receives yummy nutrients found in healthy soil. Children should learn that the roots must never be disturbed;
- Encourage your child to become involved in all stages of gardening by buying him or her a set of gardening tools. There are plenty of brightly coloured, child-sized tools available at hardware stores and nurseries;
- The more fun your child has in the garden the more involved s/he will become. Even the chores of weeding can become a game if you turn it into a competition to see who can make the biggest pile of weeds. Your child's garden can also become productive for more than just meals. There are many organic and farmers' markets springing up all over our city. Most of them have a community table where your child can package and sell extra produce from the garden. At the Bamboo Market in Melville, I recently saw a three-year-old having the time of her life selling cherry tomatoes for R3.00 a bag;
- The best plants for a child's vegetable garden are those which germinate quickly and are fast growing, otherwise your child will soon lose interest. Try sunflowers, peas, lettuces, spinach, radishes, spring onions, cherry tomatoes and gem squash.

*If you have any queries, contact Jane by email on [info@janedeliciousgarden.com](mailto:info@janedeliciousgarden.com) or via her website: [www.janedeliciousgarden.com](http://www.janedeliciousgarden.com) © Jane's Delicious Garden*



### TECHNOLOGY AND CHILDREN

In acknowledgement of parents concerned about the impact of new technology on their children, a group of specialists is running a workshop on August 1 called Wired Parenting.

Whether it's MXit, Facebook or general access to the Internet, adults are



frequently overwhelmed and challenged by their own inexperience. The team is intent upon empowering parents and providing them with insight into the latest technologies, the impact they have on children and how best to manage the process – safely.

Speakers include:

Dion Chang of Flux Trends; Angus Robinson, Brandsh Media, a mobile and social media company; Carol Affleck, clinical psychologist and Dr Pieter Streicher, MD of BulkSMS.com, a mobile messaging company.

Q & A sessions will be chaired by *learnthings*.

Wired Parenting takes place at the University of Johannesburg, Bunting Road campus in the auditorium of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA). Tickets cost R600 (excluding VAT) for a session that runs from 09h00 until 13h00.



For more information visit [www.learnthings.co.za/wiredparenting](http://www.learnthings.co.za/wiredparenting) or contact Nadia Osso on 011 802 1611 and email [nadia@gocomms.co.za](mailto:nadia@gocomms.co.za)

### WALK JOHANNESBURG

With many arterial roads due for closure on July 26, Melville News intern **David Molelekoa** gets into the spirit of the annual Talk Radio 702 walk.

For some, taking a walk is nothing but an excuse not to go to gym but they say it can increase your life expectancy (though I'm still not sure who they are).

Fifty thousand people have enrolled in this year's Discovery Walk The Talk. Talk Radio 702's annual event will see participants gathering at Marks Park Sports Club on Sunday, July 26 before they set off in four categories of 5km, 8km, 15km and 30km. They stand a chance to win one of three gold coins courtesy of the South African Gold Coin Exchange.

Entering for the second time, Theresa Gilmartin and 40 other disabled senior citizens from the Forest Farm institute for cerebral palsy sufferers says they can't wait to gear up. In their wheelchairs, they'll be pushed by volunteers from start to finish in the 5km walk. "We intend to have fun and make more friends", says Theresa.

Dogs and their owners will also be among the walkers with each dog receiving a doggy registration bag filled with goodies. Pheladi Gwangwa, Talk Radio 702 station manager and "mom" to a boxer called Smallie-small adds: "As a dog owner myself, I think taking part in the Discovery Walk The Talk is a great way to bond with your pet in a safe environment. It's really going to be a great day out for all".

For more information about road closures go to [www.walkthetalk.co.za](http://www.walkthetalk.co.za).

### GREEN MATTER

As we become more informed about environmental pollution and global warming, **Verity Ross** says it's time to do something about it.

Products do not litter - people do. And we can all apply our minds to easy ways of being pro-active by recycling what we discard.

Polystyrene packaging is ubiquitous so I sought advice from the Polystyrene Packaging Council about the best way to dispose of it. The council suggests we rinse off food trays, cups, plates, take-away boxes and drop them off at recycling centres. It's really not a mission. When your refuse bag is full of rinsed polystyrene, pop down to the centre once a month and drop it off. The centre also takes bottles, papers, cardboard and the like, and you'll find very reasonably priced compost there too.

In case you're wondering what happens to the polystyrene from there, it is transformed into myriad different things such as picture frames, curtain rods, hold-backs, cornices, skirting, outdoor furniture, poles, decking, seedling trays and the simple coat hanger.

Our nearest drop-off site is in Victory Park and is open all weekend. Directions: from Melville, drive down Barry Hertzog and turn right into Victory Road towards Parkhurst. The Pikitup centre is on the right about 500m up the road.

More information can be obtained from the website [www.polystyrenepackaging.co.za](http://www.polystyrenepackaging.co.za) or from council head Adri Spangenberg on 012 259 0554.

### LETTERS

- I particularly enjoyed reading Fiona Ramsey's article on the Saturday lunch club. I certainly have good memories of lunching at Roma - you simply did not bother going there on Saturdays if you wanted a quiet lunch! I remember Enrico plastering the entire window of Roma with blue paint, announcing the arrival of his son! The early Melville Mardis Gras were fabulous as detailed in an earlier issue. Great memories of great times. *Dorothea Jackson*
- I always enjoy the Melville newsletter. Interesting news and info and very professional. *Magdaleen Kruger, Head: RSG*

2009/07/18

## proWRITE: writing services - sub-e...

- Congratulations on another excellent edition of the Melville News - enjoyed all the contributions and once again thought how foolish they were to move the Melville Library. I used to go when it was in the house but gave up after it moved. *Patti Garlick, Editor: Your Family*
- Well done on another superb edition! And many thanks for the profile on Cynthia (Rose). *Kerry Harris*
- This issue (Melville News 5) looks stunning and is very interesting! *Rozanne Myburgh (formerly Art Director of Melville News)*.

### SMALLS

**PRUNE** and clean up your garden for spring and summer. Phone Richard Shabangu on 073 281 8016. Ref: Suzanne Brenner

**ORGANIC CHICKENS** AT R29 per kilo. For deliveries of 20 or more, phone Carl Nel on 084 508 3817. Ref: Charlene Smith

**WANTED!** Your stories for Melville News. Email Suzanne on [prowrite@mweb.co.za](mailto:prowrite@mweb.co.za)

Charlene Smith (phone 082 495 8716) highly recommends the following chars:

**Emily Manye** is looking for extra work on Tuesday, Wednesday and/or Friday. Call her on 082 541 4414.

**Patience Dladu** needs extra work on Mondays, Wednesday and/or Thursday. Call her on 073 862 1711.

Send your smalls to [prowrite@mweb.co.za](mailto:prowrite@mweb.co.za)

Please include your name and a contact detail for reference purposes and ensure your copy is no more than 20 words.

### WINNER

#### *Last issue's give-away winner*

Heather Eyre is the winner of the Melville News giveaway from Pop\*Ins.

### MELVILLE NEWS FREE SUBSCRIPTION

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