

Friends of the South African Museum

A component of the Iziko Museums of Cape Town

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NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2005

As we come to the end of 2005 the Friends can reflect on a year filled with interesting activities and one in which new friendships were made. The committee wishes to thank members for your wonderful support during the year and to wish you all a happy holiday season. We look forward to sharing new adventures with you all in 2006.

ICONS OF GOLD BEJEWELLED – The second half of 2005 has been an active and busy one with two enjoyable guided tours of the current exhibition at the Gold of Africa Museum with the charming Jacques to guide the groups through the fascinating display of ancient and modern design.

GROOTE SCHUUR GUIDED TOURS – Two more guided tours of Groote Schuur in August and October were fully booked. Alta Kriel once again shared her enthusiasm and love for this beautiful house, its history and the interesting collection of treasures on display. Even though we have arranged three tours of Groote Schuur this year there are still many members who would like to visit the house so we will include it in the programme for 2006.

SOUTHERN NAMAQUALAND – THE NATURAL HISTORY: This is how Janie Taylor experienced the recent excursion with John Almond:

A varied, interesting and fun time was had by all on this safari into the interior, expertly led by Dr John Almond in a dusty white bakkie. Interesting geological sites (glacial pavements), spectacular scenery (the Kobbie Pass and the Loeriesfontein kokerboom forest), and steady doses of mind-blowing information (ranging from buzz-pollination to cratonic motions), spiced with quirky asides in the team leader's inimitable twinkling style, were the order of the day. Accommodation and food at the quiet, yet colourful, and spotlessly clean Namaqualand Country Lodge (unanimously declared a contemporary anthropological site worth a visit) was of the first order, with special mention of the rump steaks and ice cream. Miss this weekend away from the rat race at your own peril.

Ed: The repeat of this excursion on 25 – 27 November is fully booked, but if sufficient members indicate the wish to explore this interesting region it may be possible to include another trip in the programme for 2006.

THE FINAL EVENT FOR 2006 – TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER AT 19:00 - (See enclosed pamphlet)

A CELEBRATION OF THE NATURAL, AND UNNATURAL, SCIENCES IN POETRY AND MUSIC

Presented by Brian Warner, Gus Ferguson, Susan Rivera, John Orr and Medeé Rall accompanied by Johann Kotze (guitar) and Jacques Coetzee (vox humana). Celebrated writer and poet Antjie Krog will join the group as a guest reader. This evening marks the tenth, or thereabouts, anniversary of this popular event. A light supper will be served afterwards in the Whale Well.

Cost: Members – R25,00 per person Non-members – R75,00 per person. Cost includes a light supper.

Booking is essential for catering purposes. RSVP by 22 November 2005 to Maxine at 072 225 6893

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2006: Membership of the Friends of the S A Museum runs from January to December and will soon be due for renewal. A renewal form for 2006 is enclosed. Please complete and return with the appropriate payment before we all get swept up in the 'silly' season.

2006 ACTIVITIES

FOSSIL EXCURSION: 22 – 27 MARCH 2006

Roger Smith will lead a fossil hunting trip into the Great Karoo in March. This is always a popular event in the Friends calendar so get your booking in early.

Details and costs will be advised as soon as they are available.

NAMIBIA: DESERT & WILDLIFE SAFARI: 20 May – 1 June 2006 The Friends are spreading their wings and heading out to explore new horizons. A Namibian adventure has been planned in 2006. This will be a unique opportunity to venture beyond our borders and visit all those intriguing places you always wanted to see and without having to do all the planning. The trip will include visits to Etosha, the Hoba Meteorite, Twyfelfontein rock paintings and engravings in Damaraland-Khorixas, the Petrified Forest, Burnt Mountain and the Organ Pipes, Welwitschia Hill, Brandberg Mountains with the famous painting of the White Lady, Swakopmund and the spectacular red dunes at Sossusvlei before returning to Windhoek. Here is your chance to see it all at once in the good company of like-minded Friends.

Cost; R19 995 single supplement R3 795. This includes return airfares from Cape Town, all accommodation and transport, all meals - except two lunches. All that is left for you to do is pack your bags and join in the fun. Contact Maxine for full details at any of the numbers provided in this newsletter.

LECTURES IN 2006

All lectures take place on the last Tuesday of each month at **19:00** in the T H Barry Lecture Theatre at the South African Museum. Lectures are free for members and guests pay R20,00. **There will not be a lecture in January, the 2006 lecture programme begins with the popular Dr Roger Smith.**

Tuesday 28 February 2006

Speaker: Dr Roger Smith

Tracking Gondwanan Dinosaurs: Roger Smith will give an illustrated update on recent fieldwork in Lesotho and Madagascar trying to find out how dinosaurs migrated through Gondwana whilst it was in the process of breaking up. Interesting similarities and differences between the various dinosaur populations, and their trackways, will be used to indirectly reconstruct the sequence of continental break-up. This talk will also show how dinosaur trackway surfaces are studied and what they tell us about dinosaur locomotion around 200 million years ago and also give a brief glimpse into what the dinosaurs looked like in the Cape 70 million years ago.

Tuesday 28 March 2006

Speaker: John Taylor

Sex and the Single Bat: An amusing slide show looking at bat biology and sexual strategies.

Bats, as the only true flying mammals, have been amazingly successful in the ecological niche they occupy, with nearly 1 000 different species recorded worldwide. Having to cope with the demands of flight has led to numerous singular and unexpected physical adaptations, quite a number of them specifically related to their ability to procreate and the sexual strategies related thereto.

YOUR COMMITTEE: The committee is very happy to let you all know that Greg Harvey has agreed to remain as a member for the current year and that Terri Haag will still be part of the team.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE IN 2006? The committee is currently planning the programme of lectures and activities for 2006 and invites members to offer suggestions for guest speakers and ideas for places of interest to visit. Please let us know what is on your 'wish list'.

WELCOME TO ALL NEW MEMBERS: It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members who have joined since September 2005 – you are very welcome.

Bennett, Christopher & Mary
Brennan, Dr Sean and family
Dagut, Merton & Jenifer
de la Harpe, Sydney & Myra
Jeffery Tanya and family
Hamilton, Pamela

Holloway, Dusty
Lewis, Jillian
Loncarevic, Jeanette
Meyers, Dillion
Monaghan, Mary
Bermeister, Sue and Roy

Pietersen, Michelle
Pothier, Leonard & Valerie
Scharpey-Schafer, John & Sylvia
Sheasby, Cassie
Slomowitz, Ilana

Thank you to the members of the committee who have worked so well together to make 2005 a successful and enjoyable year for the Friends of the South African Museum and who have been a great support for me personally.

Maxine Davies
Co-ordinator and Administrator
Friends of the South African Museum

