

## THE DROSTDY MUSE NEWS



### Volume 1, Number 3

#### Editorial

Another year has passed in a flash, and once again the silly season is upon us. Perhaps we need to take a new look at Christmas and the holiday period, and see it as a time for renewal. A time to allow the simplicity of the Nativity to touch us with a true spirit of goodwill to all who share this country with us. A Christmas miracle for South Africa would be a return to the optimism and joy we felt in 2004 at the birth of our democracy. Let's rest now and return to work in 2005 with a fresh burst of energy in our pilgrimage to achieve transformation and work-place harmony. Happy holidays!



#### **Drostdy Museum shines!**

On Friday 5 November, Tizzie Mangiagalli, museum manager, attended the Western Cape's Arts, Culture and Heritage Awards evening at a glittering ceremony at Spier Estate. To the great delight of museum staff, the Drostdy Museum in Swellendam was voted the best museum in the Western Cape, and Tizzie returned to Swellendam with an impressive



**Mr Rod Solomons and Tizzie Mangiagalli**

trophy designed by Carrol Boyes, which he accepted on behalf of the museum. Leslie Howard, a museum friend and voluntary worker, submitted the necessary motivation on the strength of her close association with the museum and its activities.

The Drostdy is the only remaining museum in the Western Cape operating from the original VOC (Dutch East India Company) buildings. The gracious old buildings are the pride of Swellendam, and all credit is due to the staff of dedicated workers for the excellent upkeep and maintenance of both buildings and artefacts. The conservation building is a special facility allowing for the expert storage and restoration of documents, textiles and artefacts. There are also a number of very special collections. Public programmes and community projects include the training of the local youth as museum guides, a special programme for pre-schoolers, and cross-cultural festivities. Of course none of this can be achieved without sound management and a spirit of co-operation amongst staff.

Well done to Tizzie Mangiagalli and his staff for bringing this honour to Swellendam!



**Gwen Fagan addresses the Garden Club**

Well-known rose expert Gwen Fagan, who laid out the Mayville Garden in 1978, addressed the Garden Club at its last function of the year on 3 November in the museum lecture hall. No surprise that her subject was heritage roses, and she kept her eager audience enthralled with tales of roses around the world and especially in the Western Cape. Jomien Havenga, a museum employee talked briefly about the work at Mayville.

Guests walked through the museum grounds to Mayville, where they enjoyed tea on the lawns in Victorian style. Almost without exception, they left the function with the express purpose of buying heritage roses. Gwen Fagan can be thanked for boosting Swellendam's nursery trade in the month of November!



On Friday 19 November, the Drostdy hosted the launch of **Overberg Tapestry**, the exciting new publication by author Leslie Howard and photographer Keith Phillips. Museum manager Tizzie Mangiagalli spoke about the significance of the book for Overberg Tourism and the author thanked the museum for all the resources that had been made available to her during her research. The 90 guests who attended enjoyed a glass of wine and snacks, and kept the author and photographer busy signing

books. The book was received enthusiastically, and is available at the Museum shop and Exclusive Books.



### **Volunteer worker Valerie van Heusden uncovers VOC accounts**

When Valerie van Heusden moved to Swellendam with her husband in 2001, she was determined to be of service to the community. After the death of her husband she became a museum friend, and offered her services as a guide at Mayville. When museum manager Tizzie heard that she is fully bilingual, however, and that she also understands Dutch, he had a far more interesting task for her. Plans to repaint the museum required research into the old VOC accounts to discover what colours were used. As she perused piles of old accounts, Valerie was rewarded in discovering what was needed in an 1823 document. The colours mentioned were green, blue and yellow! Also of interest among these old accounts were records of payments to Susan Niemandt for her services in caring for the lepers in the Hemel and Aarde Valley. To date Valerie has perused the accounts from 1777 to 1823. When this project is over, no doubt Valerie will be looking for another one. “With no cinemas and theatres in Swellendam”, she says, “People need to make their own

entertainment and keep their interests alive.”

But this is one lady who has no opportunity to be bored. Apart from her work for the museum, Valerie does pastoral work for her church in Rotary Park retirement village. This includes visiting the sick and providing support for those in need of it.

Valerie’s family also plays an important part in her life, and she proudly shows off pictures of her 15-month old granddaughter. Typical of Valerie, in terms of future plans, she says: “I’d like to be of service to others for as long as I can. And I enjoy my independence!” As Valerie loves Swellendam and finds the people here very friendly, no doubt there will be a long and happy association with the museum.

### **Memories of ‘baastuinier’ Jan Andries Auge**

A request from Germany for information regarding Johannes Andreas Auge (1711 – 1805) led to some interesting finds. Edmund H Burrows records in **Overberg Outspan** that Auge was the chief gardener at the Company’s Gardens in Cape Town. He fell on hard times in old age, and landdrost Anthonie Faure rescued him from destitution near the Gamtoos River, taking him home to Rotterdam, the historic farm in Buffeljagsrivier. Auge occupied the rooms behind the stables pictured below, and here one day he had the great delight of meeting the famous German botanist Henry Lichtenstein. Lichtenstein regarded the Company’s Gardens as Auge’s monument, and also told him of the honour Thunberg had bestowed on him by naming the indigenous *augea capensis* (a Karoo succulent) after him. Here

in Swellendam both Faure and Auge are remembered by the streets named after them.



### **Museum Manager attends oral history conference**

In the last week of October, Tizzie Mangiagalli attended an oral history conference in Pretoria with four other delegates from the Western Cape. The purpose of the conference was to encourage research into and recording of indigenous oral histories and stories in order to preserve diverse South African cultures and correct the bias of colonial reporting. It is hoped that oral history projects will provide new insights contributing to social development, human rights, and respect for cultural diversity. For Tizzie the conference was a stimulating platform that reflected the importance of his work in this respect in Caledon.

### **Strategy for human development and empowerment of Overberg communities**

As part of the Revised Integrated Development Plan for the Overberg District Municipality, the museum manager serves on an Overberg District Municipality forum to devise a strategic plan for the further establishment, development and empowerment of culture and language task groups in the region. The plan highlights the

importance of community involvement, changing awareness and perceptions and equipping heritage task teams. Such projects are essential for the balanced social development of the region and the preservation of diverse cultural identity.

**And finally some wise words** from the English author Charlotte Bronte, who said nearly two centuries ago: ***“Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among stones.”***

***In the spirit of Christmas, may an attitude of goodwill to all prevail amongst us throughout 2005!***

***Ons wens is dat die Kerstyd se gees van welwillendheid by ons sal bly gedurende 2005!***

***Ngomoya Omtsha We-Christmas  
Yanga Indlela Yokuziphatha  
Kakuhle NakhuseleKileyo  
Ingatyhileka Kuthi Sonke Side  
Sifikelele Kunyaka Ka 2005!***

Please travel safely on our roads.  
Until next time,  
The Editor.