

The Livingstone Weekly

24 February 2012

Dear All

The Namib Desert is pictured in the header. Some more of the story later ...

LIVINGSTONE

Elections in Livingstone

In Africa we take elections very seriously. Wherever you walk you can hear the people discussing politics. However, if there was a football match going on, it would be a toss-up between talking about football or politics!

This weekend, Livingstone is alive with politics because the ruling party, along with the President, is in Livingstone to trump up support for their candidate in the up and coming by-elections this week. This is the second by-election we have had in Livingstone since the main elections in 2011. We seem to have lost our MPs with regularity ...

Here are our candidates for the coming election to be held this coming week:

Lawrence Evans	Patriotic Front
Angela Ikabongo	Revolutionary Communist Party
Regina Musokotwane	United Party for National Development
Green Mwanangombe	United National Independence Party
Fred Siasuntwe	Movement for Multiparty Development

Photo from Daily Mail



Stealing Water Meters

I have mentioned this before, but I really cannot understand why people steal water meters. Here is a bit of a story from a Livingstonian:

..., something weird happened on Friday night or early Saturday morning. I awoke to find that the water had not come on yet, which is not unusual so I didn't think too much about it. When I opened my front door I noticed a huge fountain of water spraying everywhere at my front gate where the water meter is, further investigation showed that someone had climbed over the fence and illegally removed the water meter and all the pipe fittings. I am told this is a common problem, though I can't imagine what value these have to anyone else.

Can anyone enlighten the writer and me on the value of a second-hand water meter???

Elephants and Signage



There are lots of elephants around Livingstone at the moment. I took this photo last week on the way to Sun International. The eles just popped out of the trees on the right-hand side and belted across the road at a run. We need some more signage on this road (in fact, on all roads) to inform motorists of the possibility of running elephants.



I had a go at producing some signs because we could do with some signage through the parks. The road to the Falls is famous for its elephant crossings but the road to Kazungula through the park needs some signage too – there we tend to get giraffe and impala too. And, how about one for our rhino:





While I am on the topic of road signage I put in a sign which I noticed on the road in Namibia through the Bwabwata National Park. I stated that it was a hyena. A Livingstonian emailed me to say that it is not a hyena but a wild dog. Thinking about it, this is probably right as a hyena has a sloping back and this depiction of an animal certainly does not.

As a comment, the signs in Zimbabwe are better for wild dog:

So I have joined the two and come up with:



You will notice that the signs in Zimbabwe are of a different format to ours in Zambia, Botswana and Namibia. We use the European format, whereas Zimbabwe uses a style which is more common in Australia and America.

ZIM-ZAM

Kariba Dam Gates Open

Press Release from the Zambezi River Authority

The Zambezi River Authority appreciates all the concerns you raised following the notice we put out regarding the impending opening of the flood gates in early March.

The Authority has delayed opening the floodgates due to major structural maintenance works currently taking place at the reservoir. It is anticipated that the works will be completed at the end of February, following which we need to ensure the solidity of the structure before we can open the floodgates. Some of the stakeholders actually make reference to the fact that “Opening three floodgates at the same time can compromise the integrity of the dam wall,” True. However, the remedial works currently in progress are meant to protect the plunge pool scour-hole against spill jets from the gates. We are carefully watching the Dam Flood Control Rule Curve which requires the dam to be drawn down to below 64% live storage (484.15m level) at the end of February each year. The current average rising rate is 2cm per day and if we factor the highly probable large inflow into the Kariba Dam due to peak inflows of the current season, that is when the necessity to open more gates might arise.

The Zambezi River Authority has a moral duty to alert all the stakeholders downstream of a potential nature-driven eventuality and not to cause alarm. When we plan the reservoir operations, we also factor the weather, based on the information from SARCOF on the prevailing hydro-meteorological conditions on the Kariba sub-basin which indicate continued wet conditions.

At a briefing we held with stakeholders in the lower Zambezi following the opening of the floodgates in 2010, we explained the Zambezi River Authority operations and appealed to all stakeholders to move wherever possible to higher ground. The weather patterns, due to climate change, are beyond our control and like all of you, we are grappling with coping mechanisms. Most of you are aware that there are six gates at the Kariba Dam, which in the case of an emergency, may be opened all at once. This is the extreme scenario which all operators in the Zambezi River Basin should be acquainted with in terms of flood preparedness. It is unfortunate that some of the structures which are very close to the river bank might have been constructed during the prolonged drought periods, hence the situation at hand.

We fully sympathize with all the concerns raised and we shall continue to manage the situation in such a way that our operations do not cause destruction.

Sincerely

Elizabeth M. Karonga, Public Relations & Communications Manager

ZAMBIA

Internet Controls

From the Zambia Weekly

Government, with the help of China, is apparently in the process of installing deep packet inspection (DPI) technology, which will allow for internet surveillance and censorship. Officials from the country's three mobile operators (Airtel, MTN and Zamtel), and some Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have confirmed, on condition of anonymity, that they have been visited by a team from the Office of the President, the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) and the Chinese contractors. The technology involves an optical splitter to ensure that all internet traffic would be sent in duplicate to government, explained opposition NAREP president Elias Chipimo:

"This is a very serious development as there will be no secret the government will not be aware of," he told Computerworld. Government has recently failed to close government-critical online news sites such as the *Zambian Watchdog* as they are hosted outside Zambia. Now they may resort to simply blocking it. Apparently, ZICTA has the right to do this under Section 65 of the Electronic Communications and Transmission Act of 2009, relying on a Statutory Instrument No. 71, however, Chipimo queried how the new technology would fare in the light of the Bill of Rights in the constitution. ...

About DPI

The Chinese government uses deep packet inspection (DPI) to monitor and censor network traffic and content supposedly harmful to citizens or state interests. This material includes pornography, information on religion, and political dissent. Chinese network ISPs use DPI to see if there is any sensitive keyword going through their network. If so, the connection will be cut. China can apparently also block Voice over IP traffic (voice, fax and SMS – but not Skype). SMSes containing sensitive words may simply not be delivered, with no notification provided to either participant in the conversation. China apparently blocks thousands of websites such as Google Docs, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Earlier it also blocked Wikileaks, Amnesty International and Tibet Post.

One Hundred years old!

Just Imagine!

An occasion definitely worth celebrating and the Lusaka100 committee is working hard to put together a host of activities and festivities befitting our city's hundredth birthday.

On the day itself, July 31, Lusaka100 is trying to have a National Holiday proclaimed to ensure maximum participation for not only Lusaka's residents but also all Zambians. On this day, a Wednesday, Cairo Road will be the stage for a momentous celebration. These celebrations will start at dawn with a running and walking marathon which will begin and end at the South End (Kafue) Roundabout. The marathon will be followed by a Malasha Bike Race. Competitors will race from the South End Roundabout to the Church Road junction and back again. Each will carry three bags of Malasha. Prizes are being finalised.

The Malasha Bike Race will be followed by a vehicle parade led by a procession of Vintage Cars, followed by Rally Vehicles, 4X4 competitive vehicles and off-road motorcycles doing their entertaining thing. Following the vehicle parade will be a float procession open to all those willing to make the effort to participate, from schools, sporting associations and other voluntary organisations to businesses and Government Departments. Included in this particular parade will be massed bands and performing artists. The day will end off with a Live Music Concert open to all which, as one can imagine, is taking some planning. And just before July becomes August the night skies will be lit up in a firework display that will leave those watching breathless. It will truly be a day to remember! ...

To find out more, go to: <http://www.facebook.com/Lusaka100>

From Robin Pope Safaris

Life in the valley between the various tour operators is very friendly and we all work towards helping the local community as well as the conservation of our precious wildlife. This resulted in a combined decision in 2010 to set up what we call the LCCF: Luangwa Conservation Community Fund, a charity, which strives to ensure the sustainability and protection of the natural resources, which we rely so heavily on for our business. The fund is sustained by \$10 from every booking that we receive going into the "kitty". We share this between the SLCS (South Luangwa Conservation Society) and Project Luangwa.



SLCS works closely with ZAWA (Zambian Wildlife Authority) in law enforcement and the money donated through LCCF ensures that each year we are able to provide the scouts with new equipment such as GPS's, binoculars, accommodation and transport to get them to and from the various patrols. During the course of the year there were 4,901 scout patrols in and around the National Park. These patrols maintain a presence and help to prevent, reduce poaching activity. Snares are retrieved and removed and are even turned into keyrings and jewelry which are then sold and the money ploughed back into the fund. There is now also aerial support for the scouts and this enables larger areas of the National Park to be surveyed as well as areas with limited access during the rainy season to also be monitored.

Closer to home, SLCS are also working on educational programs for the local communities "living with wildlife". It is key to also ensure that the local communities benefit from the wildlife and the tourism that it brings in to the area in order for such a project to be successful.

As for Project Luangwa, the team works endlessly to maintain and improve the standards of education and classrooms something which is largely achieved with the donated funds from so many of you, so let me take



this opportunity to thank you all for your contributions.

Project Luangwa started at around the same time as LCCF and has been able to continue mostly due to the support and funds provided as a result. One major rule that the project has in place is that none of the donated funds goes towards admin costs and everything is put into improvements of facilities and projects.

So here goes with some really interesting and exciting figures for you to all mull over: Since 2010 the project has been able to provide 1033 text books, plant 69 trees, sink 1 borehole, build 16 classrooms, 2 dormitories, 1 toilet block and 1 science block, employ watchmen at the schools and employ 12 permanent teachers. Whilst these achievements are largely down to the donations given, if it weren't for the funds produced by LCCF, there would be no way of running or managing the project and whilst there is still an awful lot which still needs to be done this is a fantastic start and can only go from strength to strength.

ZIMBABWE

Hwange Safari Lodge

I went down to Bulawayo during the week and, of course, stopped off at Hwange Safari Lodge for a night on the way back. It is looking so green now after all the rain. The elephants did not even bother to come and visit the waterhole – the waterhole was a scene of quiet contentment with zebra, wildebeest, impala, baboons all relaxing.



The baboons were there in their numbers – probably more than 50 of them. I noticed that the staff were always on the lookout for them entering the lodge grounds and everyone seemed to take up the responsibility for chasing them away. They were great entertainment, though ...





We did hear a lion roaring in the early evening, but we didn't see it.

Vic Falls Tram

Seen on the bridge:



Road from Vic Falls Airport

While driving into Victoria Falls Town I was initially pleased to see that a construction team was working on the road. I assumed at first that they were just tidying up the hard shoulder and then I noticed many trees





uprooted and lying in the bush.

A bulldozer was busy knocking down all the trees along the roadside. I can only

assume that the road is to be widened, ... but at what cost to the environment???

Why is it that we see buildings and tar roads as a sign of development? Surely the road which was perfectly adequate for the needs of travellers in the area would have stood out more with its beautiful teak trees lining the road.

More Airlines for Zimbabwe

According to a report in the Financial Gazette five airlines have applied to fly into Zimbabwe - Air France, Bulgarian Airlines, Austrian Airlines, Egypt Air and Swiss Air.

Zambezi Island Lodge

A new luxury lodge has opened on the Zambezi River near Msuna.

The lodge is for lovers of the Zambezi River, especially if fishing is your sport. It is, though, a very pretty spot and somewhere to relax and read a book, if that is your cup of tea.

Access is via the Bulawayo Road, turning off towards Kamativi.



The lodge is for groups of people (minimum 6) and will only have one group at a time.



Contact Sonja on todd.sonja@gmail.com for more information.

Mongwe Wilderness Area

Another lodge which is not new, but I have just found, is Mongwe Camp near Chirundu. The lodge is within



a safari area and has regular visits by elephant, buffalo and other wildlife. Again this lodge is for lovers of the Zambezi River and the possibility of catching a few fish. But the wildlife is an added attraction.

The camp is self-catering with chalets or camping and the whole camp can be booked out by a group.

Access is on a dirt road 6km from the Chirundu border. High clearance vehicle is necessary, 4x4 in the rains.

Contact Robyn at Mwinilunga Safaris:
mwinilunga@mweb.co.zw



2013 ANNUAL V.F.A.P.U. FUNDRAISER



A JOURNEY LIKE NO OTHER

**JOIN US ON A FUNDRAISER LIKE NO OTHER ABOARD THE
VICTORIA FALLS STEAM TRAIN
IN SUPPORT OF THE VICTORIA FALLS ANTI POACHING UNIT
AND THEIR DEVOTED CAUSE TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT
OUR WILD LIFE**

Date: 23 March 2013 Time: 16h00 - LATE
Price: us\$45-00 (snacks included)
TICKETED BAR
 FOR BOOKINGS, DONATIONS OR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL OR E-MAIL:
TONYA MEIKLE: +263 775 107 175 or tonyameikle@yahoo.com
LORNE STEEL: +236 779 722 118 or lorne@steamtraincompany.com

**INCLUSIVE OF A TRIP TO THE VICTORIA FALLS BRIDGE
FOLLOWED BY A CELEBRATION AT
JAFUTA SIDING.
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT!
PRIZES TO BE WON!**

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:
Steam Train Office, Liquorama & Shoe Strings



NAMIBIA

Valley of a Thousand Hills

Last week I wrote about our journey from just south of Etosha, to Skeleton Coast and then through the Namib Desert. We arrived in the dark at a campsite, very tired, with no idea where we were. Without bothering to eat we slept.





Just as the light glimmered through the tent in the morning, I got up to have a look. Wow. What a view.



In front of us were hills and more hills. Low rolling ones in front and many peaks in the distance.

Come and have a look at this, I said to Josh.



We sat and watched the sun rise in front of us. The breeze wafted on our faces as we looked from left to right over the expansive view. There was no-one to spoil the experience. This is part of the real magic of Africa.



We sat and had our breakfast of a mug of muesli with a cup of coffee. We couldn't believe our luck to find such a place.

As the sun began to rise we could feel the heat starting up. This is the Namib Desert and we knew that the day would be a hot one. I took myself off to shower in the first-class bathroom in a little thatched hut.

Tent down, car packed and off we went, knowing that the experience at Namib's Valley of a Thousand Hills had given us our best memory of the whole Namibia tour.



There was a bit more of a horrid dirt road but finally we reached Windhoek and got lost looking for a bank. Having finally located one, I went in to change some money. I waited for over half an hour in a short queue which did not move and finally gave up and left. I went to an ATM instead.



The next part of our journey was west towards Botswana on the Trans Kalahari Highway. An easy road after the previous day – excellent tar. We headed towards Zelda's Guest Farm which was close to the border and stopped there for the night. In the morning we were woken up by cocks crowing and the sounds of animals fidgiting about the place. I got up to find meerkats, chickens, rabbits all wandering around the campsite and picking up bits of food here and there. Great entertainment. One meerkat came for a visit.

We reached the border early along with what seemed like a hundred trucks all doing the same route. The border formalities were painless but negotiating through all the trucks was not, but we managed and took the road to Maun.

Caprivi Floods

According to a report this week the villagers along the Zambezi Floodplain to the southwest of Katima Mulilo are suffering from flooding. The Zambezi rose quickly and authorities were not prepared.

Lawrence Sampofu, Caprivi Regional Governor: *The villages are already underwater. The crops are also submerged. We will continue providing food relief to our people because their fields have been destroyed by floods.*

Hopefully, during the week areas of bush have been cleared so that the people can move onto higher ground.

BOTSWANA

KHAMA HITS OUT AT CHINESE

From The Ngami Times

'We have had bad experiences with Chinese companies'

If President Ian Khama has any say in the matter, and he most certainly shall, Chinese companies may not be collecting many more government contracts in Botswana in the near future. He also says there has been excessive migration of Chinese to take jobs that should be done by Botswana and has asked the Immigration department to get him accurate statistics on the subject.

“We accept China's goods. But they don't have to export their population to sell us those goods. That we can quite ably do. They will crowd us out,” he added.

The prospects for Chinese bidders for infrastructure tenders are not looking great.

“You know, we have had some bad experiences with Chinese companies in this country,” Khama said in an interview this week with the Johannesburg newspaper “Business Day.”

“The best way I can put it is that we are very, very particular now. We are going to be looking very carefully at any company that originates from China in providing construction services of any nature,” he said.

Business Day says “power generation is the key sector where China is not favoured inside the Office of the President. Frequent cuts in Botswana's power supply are affecting everyone, from business and retail to ordinary people. “The disruption is not what Botswana have known during the past decades of rapid growth, built on diamonds, agriculture and tourism. Power shortages will not attract the large investment in railways, roads and mining that are planned.”

Khama laid the blame for the country's chronic shortage of power at one door -

“Right now, as we speak today, we should be totally self-sufficient if we hadn't been let down by the Chinese.

“Those generation plants at Morupule B should have all been up and running by the end of last year - but only one of the four is operating,” he said. “We have started really tightening up on the way Chinese companies deliver on government contracts,” he said.

Relations with China were excellent as recently as 2009 when Chinese companies were running 18 construction projects in Botswana, building stadiums, schools, hospitals, airports and public buildings. In the same year, agreements were signed for the US\$1.6bn expansion of Morupule B, financed by the Botswana government, and involving the installation of four 150 megawatt coal-fired units.

On the basis that everything would be up-and-running on schedule in 2012, Khama said, Botswana did not negotiate extra supply from SA's Eskom.

“Now we have had to go on our knees, begging Eskom to continue supplying us even though they have their own challenges in SA. “They have been very generous and understanding but they cannot guarantee an uninterrupted supply,” he said, adding that he expected the months-long shortage to be over in a few weeks.

Business Day says the power issue clearly rankles “perhaps because it does not project the image - forged by Khama's late father, Sir Seretse Khama - of a quietly efficient African country where almost everything works.”

It adds that judging by Khama's comments, it will be a big ask for a Chinese company to get a slice of lucrative future rail projects. Some of Botswana's enormous untapped coal deposits are destined to be carried on new railways linking to ports in Namibia and Mozambique. Khama said that if the rail projects are to be financed by private companies, the government will have no say in the choice of sub-contractors. “But certainly if government has anything to do with it we would be urging caution to those private companies to ensure that they don't have the scenario that we have experienced here. “Companies from there (China) put up a structure and after some time you find it falling apart and needing a lot of maintenance before maintenance should be due,” he said.

“The workmanship is not the best,” he added. ...

State pays dearly for ferry breakdowns

From the Ngami Times

The Kazungula Ferry's cumulative cost on repairs has cost government P1 764, 662.00, Parliament has been told. The Minister of Transport and Communications, Nonofu Molefhi, said since commissioning on January 10, 2011, the ferry has had several breakdowns. Responding to a question, Molefhi said one major breakdown was the thruster assembly, which was damaged following collision with an under-water metal cargo container. Other breakdowns including broken flippers getting damaged upon loading vehicles on the Zambia landing bay were minor. Another was a faulty charging system which required new alternators and the propulsion unit stem was damaged last year. Molefhi said periodic servicing of the ferry was carried out after every 250 hours of operation as recommended by the manufacturer. This servicing usually took a maximum of two days to be completed. He said two ferries belonging to Zambia and one to Botswana were operating between the two countries at Kazungula. "In case of breakdown of one ferry, the other two are still available for transporting passengers and vehicles between the two countries", he said.

TANZANIA

From Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF)

AWF applauds the Tanzanian government's decision to withdraw its proposal to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to conduct a one-time sale of more than 100 tons of it stockpiled ivory to China and Japan. The government's decision to withdraw the proposal comes amidst an elephant-poaching crisis stemming from a growing demand for ivory, primarily in Asia. "By withdrawing this controversial proposal, Tanzania has reaffirmed its commitment to protect a species integral to natural ecosystems and one that the tourism industry depends on," said AWF CEO Patrick Bergin. The CITES 16th Conference of the Parties takes place March 3-15.

THE SMILE

A blonde walks into a bank in Johannesburg and asks for the loans dept.

She says she's going to Europe on business for three weeks and needs to borrow R10,000.

The bank officer says the bank will need some kind of security for the loan, so the blonde hands over the keys to a new Rolls Royce. The car is parked on the street in front of the bank, she has the papers and everything checks out.

The bank agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan.

The bank manager and its staff all enjoy a good laugh at the blonde for using a R500,000 Rolls as collateral against a R10,000 loan.

An employee of the bank then proceeds to drive the Rolls into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, the blonde returns, repays the R10,000 and the interest, which comes to R141.66. The bank manager says, "Miss, we are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a multimillionaire. What puzzles us is, why would you bother to borrow R10,000?"

The blond replies ... "Where else in Johannesburg can I park my car for two weeks for only R141.66 and expect it to be there when I return?"

Finally, a gifted blonde!!!!

Have a good week

Gill