

The New Richmond Reader

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Your Literary News from the Heart of the
Karoo

September 19, 2019.

Dear Karoosters,

We are just back from a quick trip to the dorp and the place, despite the gloom amongst the farmers who are looking at their parched veld and having to stress about the threats of illegal land grabs by those in the government and other demagogues, was looking in great shape and lots of new buzz and activities. We all have to pray for rain and for common sense to prevail and keep the farmers on their farms producing the food which makes their naysayers fat.

Farming is not for the faint hearted and to think that anyone not fully cultured and even genetically inclined can make a farm work is way out to pasture. Genetically you ask? Yes. Farmers don't suffer such things as bad backs because those with bad backs never managed to successfully farm; it was impossible to plough, ride a horse / tractor, or dig a fence pole with a bad back. The physically unfit have been weeded out of all farming societies over the centuries. Farming in the Karoo desert is not like in some green pastured expanse of farmland in Scotland or even Canada. It is harsh and demands very tough hands and very deep pockets to pay out cash when there is no rain and fodder must be brought in. I know one Karoo farmer who indicated

that he would need a million in cash to feed his flocks during this drought. And there is no Land Bank. Farming is about having a very friendly bank manager who is himself taking a huge risk with threats of land grabs without any compensation. Such brainless politics this government of ours foments, and the country wonders why we are bordering on junk status. A junk government cannot pay the bills, the more so with the systematic looting of the coffers of every government department and SOE.

This year we have roped in a few stalwarts to help with the introductions and SAIPA Ceremony. Writer, vet, and good all-rounder Mike Lowry from Howick will be handling some of the daily introductions and the Q&A's following. We have the pleasure of telling everyone that Tracey Going will be the MC of the SAIPA Banquet on the Thursday evening. Yes, you read correctly, we are shifting the Banquet to the Thursday to accommodate more of the general attendees who wish to partake of the centrepiece of BookBedonnerd. If you would like the challenge and opportunity to join the Booktown Team as a chair of one of the speakers sessions, or perhaps to introduce an author whose works you are familiar with, please do not hesitate to contact me (082-941-1572 or 011-447-2517 and pcbaker@pcbaker.co.za).

Delegation is the key to success in just about all endeavours and it is something which DD and PCB have been woefully poor at. We hope that this will be the start of the transfer of the mantle of Booktown Richmond to new blood with new ideas and energy. We all look forward to seeing BookBedonnerd grow and develop well into the next decade.

I shall though firmly retain complete operational control of the important stuff like the daily wine tastings in the late afternoon.

The local hostelrys in the dorp are filling up and some are already fully booked, so please reserve your favourite spot. There are a few new places which should be open and worth a look. Check out the new Seisoen Karoo Retreat at the very top of Loop Street, and the Richmond Small Karoo Hotel just beside the BTRHQ.

The first draft of the programme is as per the following....history has shown that you can expect a few shuffles here and there, but that is what it is to be Bedonnerd!

