



# HOWZAT!



The Rotary Club of Newlands

*The Club that Appeals*



PRESIDENT	JENNY IBBOTSON
Editor	Janey Ball
Email	<a href="mailto:howzat@newlands.org.za">howzat@newlands.org.za</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.newlands.org.za">www.newlands.org.za</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NewlandsRotary">www.facebook.com/NewlandsRotary</a>



*Apologies before 10:00 on a Monday to Heidi Andersson, please.*

## COMMENT: PSEUDOSCIENCE is RAMPANT: HOW NOT TO FALL FOR IT

(by Stuart Firestein, via Peter Ennis)

The scientists, experts who would be the first to admit they are not infallible, are now in danger of being drowned out by the growing chorus of pseudoscientists, conspiracy theorists, and just plain troublemakers that seem to be as symptomatic of the virus as fever and weakness.

Separating real science from pseudoscience is not a new problem. Philosophers, politicians, scientists, and others have been worrying about this perhaps since science as we know it, a science based entirely on experiment and not opinion, arrived in the 1600s. The original charter of the British Royal Society, the first organized scientific society, stated that at their formal meetings there would be no discussion of politics, religion, or perpetual motion machines.

The first two of those for the obvious purpose of keeping the peace. But the third is interesting because at that time perpetual motion machines were one of the main offerings of the imitators, the bogus scientists who were sure that you could find ways around the universal laws of energy and make a buck on it. The motto adopted by the society was, and remains, *Nullius in verba*, Latin for “take nobody’s word for it.”

You might think that telling phony science from the real thing wouldn’t be so difficult, but events, historical and current, tell a very different story—often with tragic outcomes. Just one terrible example is the estimated 350,000 additional HIV deaths in South Africa directly caused by the now-infamous conspiracy theories of their own elected President no less (sound familiar?). It’s surprisingly easy to dress up phony science as the real thing by simply adopting, or appearing to adopt, the trappings of science.

Thus, the anti-vaccine movement claims to be based on suspicion of authority, beginning with medical authority in this case, stemming from the fraudulent data published by the now-disgraced Andrew Wakefield, an English gastroenterologist. And it’s true that much of science is based on

suspicion of authority. Science got its start when the likes of Galileo and Copernicus claimed that the Church, the State, even Aristotle, could no longer be trusted as authoritative sources of knowledge.

But Galileo and those who followed him produced alternative explanations, and those alternatives were based on data that arose independently from many sources and generated a great deal of debate and, most importantly, could be tested by experiments that could prove them wrong. The anti-vaccine movement imitates science, still citing the discredited Wakefield report, but really offers nothing but suspicion—and that is paranoia, not science.

Similarly, there are those who try to cloak their nefarious motives in the trappings of science by claiming that they are taking the scientific posture of doubt. Science after all depends on doubt—every scientist doubts every finding they make. Every scientist knows that they can't possibly foresee all possible instances or situations in which they could be proven wrong, no matter how strong their data. Einstein was doubted for two decades, and cosmologists are still searching for experimental proofs of relativity. Science indeed progresses by doubt. In science revision is a victory.

The apparent success of pseudoscience is not due to gullibility on the part of the public. The problem is that science is recognized as valuable and that the imitators are unfortunately good at what they do. They take a scientific pose to gain your confidence and then distort the facts to their own purposes. How does one learn to spot the con without getting a Ph.D. and spending years in a laboratory?

What can be done to make the distinction clearer? Several solutions have been tried—and seem to have failed. Radio and television shows about the latest scientific breakthroughs are a noble attempt to give the public a taste of good science, but they do nothing to help you distinguish between them and the pseudoscience being purveyed on the neighbouring channel and its “scientific investigations” of haunted houses.

Similarly, attempts to inculcate what are called “scientific habits of mind” are of little practical help. These habits of mind are not so easy to adopt. They invariably require some amount of statistics and probability and much of that is counterintuitive—one of the great values of science is to help us to counter our normal biases and expectations by showing that the actual measurements may not bear them out.

Additionally, there is math—no matter how much you try to hide it, much of the language of science is math (Galileo said that). And half the audience is gone with each equation (Stephen Hawking said that). It's hard to imagine a successful program of making a non-scientifically trained public interested in adopting the rigors of scientific habits of mind. Indeed, I suspect there are some people, artists for example, who would be rightfully suspicious of changing their thinking to being habitually scientific. Many scientists are frustrated by the public's inability to think like a scientist, but in fact it is neither easy nor always desirable to do so. And it is certainly not practical.

There is a more intuitive and simpler way to tell the difference between the real thing and the cheap knock-off. In fact, it is not so much intuitive as it is counterintuitive, so it takes a little bit of mental work.

But the good thing is it works almost all the time by following a simple, if as I say, counterintuitive, rule.

True science, you see, is mostly concerned with the unknown and the uncertain. If someone claims to have the ultimate answer or that they know something for certain, the only thing for sure is that they are trying to fool you. Mystery and uncertainty may not strike you right off as desirable or strong traits, but that is precisely where one finds the creative solutions that science has historically arrived at. Yes, science accumulates factual knowledge, but it is at its best when it generates new and better questions. Uncertainty is not a place of worry, but of opportunity. Progress lives at the border of the unknown.

You can believe science that says there is clear evidence that takes us this far... and then we have to speculate a bit and it could go one of two or three ways—or maybe even some way we don't see yet. But like your blood pressure medicine, the stuff we know is reliable even if incomplete. It will lower your blood pressure, no matter that better treatments with fewer side effects may await us in the future.

Unsettled science is not unsound science. The honesty and humility of someone who is willing to tell you that they don't have all the answers, but they do have some thoughtful questions to pursue, are easy to distinguish from the charlatans who have ready answers or claim that nothing should be done until we are an impossible 100-percent sure.

Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery. The problem, as we all know, is that flattery will get you nowhere.

---

*Extract from an article at leapsmag.com*

## MINUTES of the PARTNERS MEETING on ZOOM, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 18h15

---

*Scribe: Terry Lancaster*

Sergeant Richard Burnett opened the meeting and called on President Jenny Ibbotson to welcome the guests. Jenny welcomed the speaker Koos Burger who is also the current President of the Cape of Good Hope Rotary Club and also our Special Guest Jeremy Opperman and all the partners who had joined the meeting.

The peace candle was then lit by Andy Ismay and Wendy Goddard read out two peace quotes.

Richard House did the Four-Way Test and John Stephenson the Grace and Toast.

Sergeant Richard then announced that the wine raffle would be back again at our next meeting.

The wooden spoon is still with Jana.

Tony Davidson then introduced the speaker Koos Burger who hardly needed an introduction as he is well-known to our club and we were all looking forward to hearing his talk.

Koos thanked the club for our support for his restoration project at the Rotary Camp in Glencairn where he is busy on Erf 60 and Erf 61 cleaning up the Else River. A great deal of debris and rotting

trees had to be removed to open-up the river which is now flowing again and the water which was muddy and dirty is now clean once again. Koos had been helped by the Chrysalis academy who worked as volunteers in exchange for the use of the property from time to time.

Koos had created the Rotary fynbos wheel from February 2020 and had used sour figs for contrast in the cogs of the Rotary wheel and the result is absolutely outstanding and is already being featured in various Rotary articles and books. During the restoration a waterfall had been uncovered and a boardwalk and bridges had been built from the funds that Newlands Rotary had donated to the project. Koos advised that he was using the funding sparingly to get the best result possible and he had a new project and wants to create another labyrinth to be known as the Rotary Life Labyrinth if this will be acceptable to Rotary International. This will be aimed at the future of Rotary and Koos wants to get the youth involved. The project must be completed by the 5 March 2021 which is Koos' birthday and he wants to have a beer on a very large rock which is part of the design but needs to be cleared first.

Koos then entertained the meeting by showing us a short film that had been done by a group of children from the Earth School Grades 7 and 8 who had visited the camp site before and after the restoration work to record the fantastic work that had been done by Koos and his hard working team.

It was then time for questions and comments.

- Tony Davidson congratulated Koos on his achievements and said that our club would continue to support the project in the future in any way that we as a club can.
- Ian Pursch also congratulated Koos and thanked him for showing a new way to wear a mask. He also asked if we could join Koos at his birthday rock for a beer on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- Jeremy Opperman thanked Koos for making the talk that visual that he could also enjoy the project.
- Mike Walwyn said that more use should be made of the project to show the wonderful work that is being done by Rotarians in protecting the environment.
- Geraldine remarked that the work done by the Earth School was great for Rotary and Koos advised that this would increase in the future with the expansion of the school.
- Jenny Ibbotson thanked Koos and said that our club would help with the project in the future and asked about the replacement of the trees that had been removed and Koos said that these were being replaced by fynbos and other better types of trees.

Heidi then thanked Koos for his talk and for letting us use the facilities offered by the camp.

Richard Burnett advised the club that the Wine Auction would be held on-line on the 14 October and Claremart would be the auctioneers.

Tony Davidson then advised the Club of the eight projects that had been selected as result of the survey that had been sent out and these would be supported by Relate.

President Jenny then thanked Koos once more and said that she was looking into in-person meetings which would be more casual at first. She also wants members to give her ideas to promote membership, raise funds and improve our finances.

Richard House was congratulated on his birthday.

Sergeant Richard then called for Happy Rands and told us that we need to support his football club Leeds United because if they win our Happy Rands will benefit. After some other Happy Rands were collected the meeting was declared closed.

## NEWLANDS ROTARY CLUB NEWS

---

There can't be a bigger PI (no.... not private investigator .... Public Image!) accomplishment than having an article published on the [Rotary Blog](#), but that's just what Vanessa Rosseau achieved, last week.

Then she topped it by landing a listing on [RI's Facebook page](#). (No! Really!!).

The trouble now is that her anonymity is shot. Just Google (yes, it is a [real] verb) "Rosseau+Rotary" and you'll learn that Vanessa's post even made it onto the listings of these pages:

- [The Rotarian Economist](#)
- [Bedworth Rotary](#)
- [The Rotary Club of Stockholm International](#)

Rock on, Vanessa! (And yes.... we so *know* it's a team effort but you *totally* made this happen.)

## MORE ROTARY NEWS

---

*Spring Open Day* will be held at the Avondale Garden in Durbanville on 19 & 20 and 26 & 27 September. Three indigenous gardens will be on view and all health protocols will be in place. If you're interested, click [here](#) for more information, and/or read on.....



### AVONDALE OPEN GARDEN

**3 Indigenous gardens on view:**

**40 Protea Way, Bergsig, Durbanville (ticket sales)**

GPS S33 49.195 E018 39.375 / Decimal S33.820 E018.660

**12 Plein Street, Durbanville**

**HBD Guest House; entry via 12 Plein Street Gate**

**19 & 20 September 2020**

and

**26 & 27 September 2020**

**9am to 5pm**

**Entry: R50.00 pp / children under 12 free**

**No tea room**

**Funds raised will be used on community projects in Durbanville and Fisantekraal**

In line with Level 2 regulations strict health protocols, will be in place:

- Temperature screening will be done upon entry
- The wearing of masks in public is mandatory: no mask, no entry
- Visitors will be expected to wear masks at all times
- Picnicking and gathering in social groups are not allowed
- Physical distancing measures will be strictly enforced



**Rotary Opens Opportunities**



**FUTURE FIXTURES** *(Online, for the time being.)*

---

**SEPTEMBER - BASIC EDUCATION and LITERACY MONTH**

- 14 Ordinary Meeting  
Speaker: Terry Lancaster, *"The Croak File"*
- 16 Board Meeting (Be there!)
- 19 District Membership Webinar (10am): *"Diversity (Equity and Inclusion)"*
- 21 Ordinary Meeting  
Speaker: Lauren Gillis and Neil Robinson  
*"Relate and its Impact, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Area of Focus Campaign"*
- 26 D9350 [E3= Entrepreneurship, Employability & Education Webinar](#): Sat 26 Sept

**OCTOBER - ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

- 5 Partners Meeting  
Speaker, June Webber: *"Kicking Polio Out of Africa"*
- 14 NSRI Wine Auction
- 19 DG Carl-Heinz Duisberg's Visit

**UMPIRES and SCORERS**

---

	14 September 2020 Ordinary	21 September 2020 Ordinary	28 September 2020 Business
Sergeant	Graham Lowden	Michael Walwyn	Graham Finlayson
Four-Way Test	Tinus de Jongh	Bill Holland	Terry Lancaster
Grace and Loyal Toast	Henry Campbell	Janey Ball	Tony van der Lith
Peace Quote/Comment		Glynis Menné-Hart	Wybe Meinesz
Minutes	Pieter van Aswegen	Jeannine Ibbotson	Richard House
Intro speaker	Brian Pickup	Vanessa Rousseau	
Thank speaker	Melinda Stapleton	Shân Biesman-Simons	
Comment	John Stephenson	Shelley Finch	Johan Beukman

*If you cannot make this duty please arrange a substitute and let the Sergeant know.*



<b>BIRTHDAYS</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> September	Johan Beukman
	20 <sup>th</sup> September	Bill Holland
<b>ANNIVERSARIES</b>		
<b>JOINED ROTARY</b>		
<b>WOODEN SPOON</b>		Jana Forrester

## CLUB OFFICE BEARERS

---



**President**  
Jenny Ibbotson



**Past President**  
Terry Lancaster



**Treasurer**  
Peter Ennis



**Secretary**  
Janey Ball



**Environment Chair**  
Tony Davidson



**ECD Project**  
Geraldine Nicol



**Vocational Service**  
Jeannine Ibbotson



**Foundation Chair**  
Mike Walwyn



**Club Services**  
Heidi Andersson



**Youth Service**  
Wendy Goddard



**International Service**  
Shân Biesman-Simons



**Entrepreneurship**  
John Stephenson



**Community Services**  
Wybe Meinesz



Vanessa Rosseau



Graham Finlayson



Shelley Finch



----- **Membership & Publicity Cluster** -----

## AND the LAST WORD .....

---

It's nearly 23h00. The Ed (uncharacteristically) has nothing (further) to say.

See you on the moro....