

## Leader/Hoofartikel

• Salomé Kotzé



# Surprise surprise

We can't say we are really surprised about the news that the Matlosana Municipality has again fallen behind in their payments to Eskom and Midvaal Water Company.

The lip service we get concerning service delivery and the "do not worry's" we got at the beginning of the year when Eskom threatened to cut the city's power supply, do not buy the whiskey anymore.

We might as well just call a spade, a spade. They are lying to us. No one will admit it, of course. And there will also be no evidence... but as the saying go, the proof is in the pudding.

The Matlosana city council's blatant refusal to accept that the municipality is in financial dire straits, is not a hand well played. And it is getting obvious.

It is high time that councillors who opposed that the municipality's financial department be placed under administration, wake-up and smell the coffee. Are you not aware that you are going under with the municipality?

But maybe we are barking up the wrong tree. Does the blame not lie with the people who voted for these councillors?

As a community we must all accept responsibility for our actions... and what is happening in this municipality, is one of the consequences for voting with your heart and not with your mind.

# Wat as my kat nies?

Die skote klief deur die naglug en ek vries in my bed. Vier skote. Ek hoor stemme. Opge-wonde. Hard. Dan bande wat skree op die teer. Nog skote.

Ek ontwaak uit my verlamming. Dis hier.

Reg voor die huis. My huis.

Ek en Die Tiener (wat nou matriek skryf) bots amper teenmekaar in die donker gang. Hy wil nog by die venster uitloer.

Nuuskierig soos ek, maar ek keer. "Hulle skiet, kom weg daar..." beveel ek en ons sink in die donker weg. Weg van die vensters.

Manlief is uitstедig. Pearlle die kat nies met dieselfde tussenposes as wat die skote oomblikke terug geklap het. En my hande bewe so, ek sukkel om die polisiestase se nommer op die simpel touch screen in te tik.

Wonderbaarlik word die foon geantwoord en al wat ek kan uitkry is "hulle skiet", woorde wat ek gehoop het my sou gespaar bly in hierdie misdaad-deurdrenkte land van ons.

Ek rammel die adres af en die vrou sê dit is die polisie.

Hulle is daar by my. Soek kabeldiewe, sê sy.

O, sê ek.

Die foon is dood.

Ons is steeds in die donker gang. Die kat nies weer. Iemand hammer aan die hek. Die sirene gaan aan en af en ligte val oor die huis. Dan is die polisiemanne in die tuin en ons drie - ek, Die Tiener en die kat, skuil binne.

Ek wil vir manlief bel. Bedink my. Want wat gaan hy nou halfvier in die oggend in Pretoria aan my saligheid kan doen?

Bel 'n vriendin. My hande bewe nog. Die Tiener loer by die venster uit. Sy arms oor sy kaal bors gespan. Die kat nies weer.

Twee, drie keer.

Na tien minute is die drama verby. Die polisie-manne klim in hul voertuie met 'n "bel ons as julle iets hoor".

Ek, Die Tiener en die kat kyk vir mekaar. Goed.

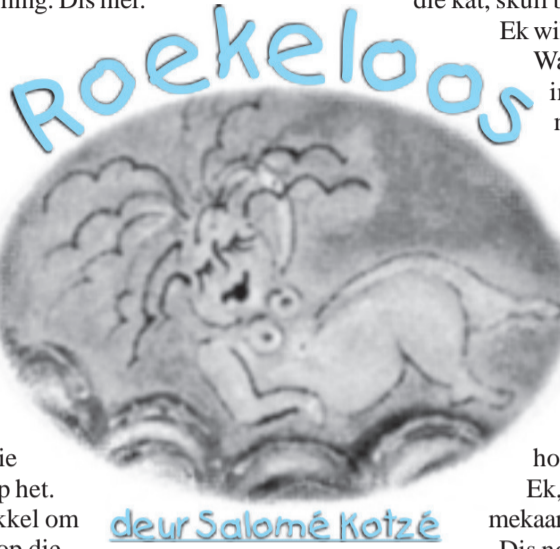
Dis nog pikdonker buite. Die Tiener is terug in die bed. Ek ook.

Wawyd-wakker.

Nou is dit net ek, die kat en my gedagtes. Ek dink oor alarmstelsels, waghonde, sekuriteitshekke en beplan hoe ek my badkamer in 'n safe room gaan omskep.

En elke keer as die blerrie kat nies, piepie ek bietjies-bietjies in my broek.

Dit is toe hoekom ek 05:00 op 'n Dinsdagoggend Google: Wat as my kat nies?



deur Salomé Kotzé

## briewe • letters

# Who's working for whom?

Tonie Meiring, via e-mail - There appears to be a change of attitude in the corridors of the municipal buildings.

The "If looks could kill" stance that prevailed is slowly making way for a welcome attitude of "How can we help you" and "Write me a note on it, it will strengthen my hand in meetings where these issues are discussed".

This is not only noticed on staff level but also at councillor level of the entire political spectrum. Is it because of an upcoming election or perhaps a realization that the council's biggest assets are not its buildings, heavy duty machinery, debtors book of R1 bn or any other tangible assets, but those 40 odd percentage of consumer debtors who pay their accounts diligently year in and year out?

Or is it perhaps that the high and mighty got wind of rumours that are resurfacing that enough is enough and that the Constitutional Court has ruled that where services are rendered payments must be made. The court has however not yet ruled that consumers must pay for fraud, corruption and mismanagement?

All these tacit reasons may have in some or other way, contributed to the welcome phenomenon.

To enhance this most welcome change in attitude it may be advisable that the council addresses the irritations and frustrations caused by some of its service providers.

Service providers work for the council not

the other way around.

What right does the consumer meter reading service provider has to prescribe to council to discontinue the age old custom that consumers or groups of consumers either phone in or e-mail its meter readings?

Is it perhaps because independent meter readers with up to thirty years experience proved how meter readings were either not done properly or guesstimated. The service provider gets paid for the readings done by public or independent persons.

So what is the fuss about?

How can this service provider contemplate changing its reading cycle which causes a low consumption account in one month and a high consumption account the next month, which in turn causes, due to sliding scale tariffs, the consumer to pay more for its average usage. This is what is causing disputes and tremendous frustrations.

Another service provider, illegally serves notices of intended cut offs and cuts the supply at the same time whilst being paid for two different operations.

Our council is being fleeced and prescribed too by these service providers. If not, proof me wrong please!

It is time that the council takes note that the public is fed up with these unscrupulous tactics or the public will have to protect itself by declaring thousands of disputes.

# Enough with the deductions!

Petrus Moshe, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (Klerksdorp Diocese) - Electricity is one of the basic commodities which people cannot live without and everyone should have access to it.

Poor members of the community of Klerksdorp, Jouberton and Alabama are paying more for municipal services rendered than the communities such as Tiganane, Kanana and Khuma. The prepaid system in Jouberton subjects members of the community to deductions made to their accounts when purchasing electricity. Most of the prepaid users are unemployed and are dependent on social grants. As Justice and Peace we visited a municipal paypoint where we met people who are suffering from deductions made every time they purchase electricity.

We have seen that residents whose accounts are in arrears, for example, if a resident purchases pre-paid electricity of R20 instead of them receiving 19.6 kW, they only receive 8 kW meaning that a resident is sold electricity worth R8 and R12 is reserved for their basic services in arrears.

We also had a meeting with a representative from the Rate Payers Association and he said residents of Jouberton

are supposed to be getting 70 free units if they have registered as indigents not 50 units that the City Council is providing. He also said the Matlosana municipality is committing a crime by even deducting electricity units from pre-paid users.

He continued to say that there was no consultation made and people were not made aware and there is no documentation in place to show that there was a council resolution taken in order to make sure that they recover money of services rendered in a form of electricity units deductions.

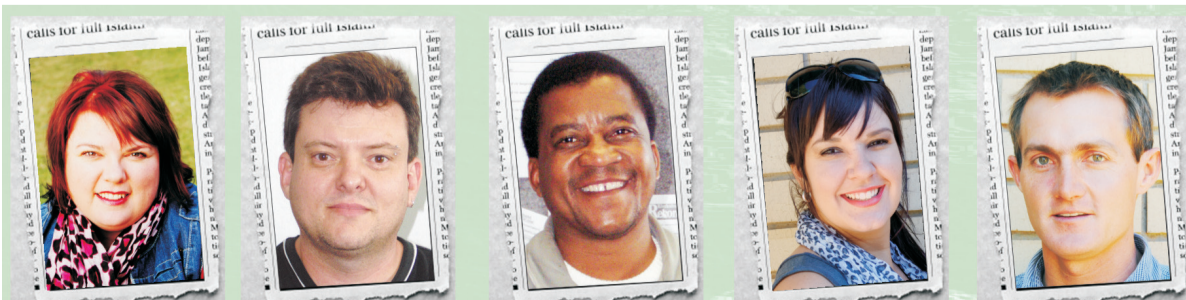
So far the Matlosana municipality has treated the residents of Jouberton with disrespect because they did not even bother to consult when they imposed this system.

On 12 September, the municipality embarked on an electricity cut-off programme which is monitored by young people who observe if residents have tampered with their electricity meter box and if they discover that a resident has tampered with the meter box, they cut off electricity supply.

Before these desperate measures of tampering with electricity meter boxes go too far, the municipality should call a meeting with Jouberton residents to normalize the situation. The City of Matlosana needs to listen to the plight of its people because we don't want to see violent actions presently happening in other municipalities being a reality here.

As the situation stands, the petitions which calls for an immediate end to deductions are being circulated around, Jouberton and Alabama and we anticipate to collect more than 10 000 signatures. Enough is enough.

• Letter shortened - Ed.



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