

Protest by matrics a damp squib as department warns: no rewrite, no results

NATASHA JOSEPH

JUST SIX of the 21 000 Western Cape matrics who will have to write their English setwork paper again later this month arrived at yesterday's protest against the rewrite.

It may have been the heat, or yesterday's physical science exam that kept them away – or perhaps, unlike one smiling Fairmont High matric candidate, most didn't fancy their chances of "picking up some chicks" at the Bellville

Velodrome.

Yesterday morning, a city newspaper reported that a mass protest action had been planned by members of a group on social networking website Facebook.

Journalists outnumbered matric candidates at the "protest" yesterday, and in spite of impassioned pleas online for group members to make an appearance, only two schools were represented.

Last week, the Western Cape Education Department

(WCED) announced that 21 000 of the province's matrics would have to rewrite their English setwork paper, after invigilators at SACS, in error, handed out copies of the paper a day before it was due to be written.

Following a departmental investigation into the incident, the school's chief invigilator, who is not a teacher, was fired and his head of English has been warned.

Headmaster Ken Ball, who is the school's accountable examinations officer, is still

being investigated for his role in the incident.

Matrics will rewrite the paper at 9am on Friday, November 23.

The Facebook group, called "I hate Sacs!", had more than 400 online members by yesterday afternoon.

Its creator, a pupil from Paul Roos Gymnasium in Stellenbosch, did not respond to messages from the Cape Times.

The site says that "Sacs is not a bad school, and the same could have happened at any

other school".

But most people posting on the group's discussion boards blame SACS for the incident, and many are annoyed that their "Matric Rage" holiday will be shortened – if only by a day – by the rewrite.

Jared Buckley, 18, of Fairbairn College, said he had heard about the protest via cellphone chat application Mxit.

"I thought we were going to strike a bit," said Buckley.

He said the rewrite was "irritating".

A matric candidate from Fairmont High said he had heard about the protest at school, and had come to "check out the chicks".

Yesterday morning, WCED deputy director-general for curriculum management, Brian Schreuder, said the protest "will not and cannot change the decision to rewrite".

He said it was "not a decision that was taken irrationally and easily. We recognise the right of learners to protest, (but) we ask that it be kept within the realms

of common sense".

Schreuder said if matric candidates refused to rewrite, they would not have completed exams and would not "be resulted". This would mean they would not get matric certificates.

He maintained that rewriting the exam was "in the interests of all matrics". "The leak ... it was wider, and incorporated many schools. There was no way to determine how far the leak had spread."

natasha.joseph@inl.co.za

City, Red1 row flares up again over delay in liquidation of body's affairs

ANÉL POWELL
Metro Writer

A NEW row has erupted between the City of Cape Town and the now defunct regional electricity distributor, Red1 – this time about who should be responsible for winding up the entity's financial matters so that it can be liquidated.

"It is time the city takes responsibility for its shoddy work and incompetence. I don't think Red1's board of directors can be held responsible," said Saleem Mowzer, who was retrenched from his position as chief executive officer in April.

But the city said Red1's liquidation was being delayed because its directors have refused to sign off the annual financial statements.

Louise Muller, director of the city's shareholding management department, said the only reason being given by the company's former top managers is that they assumed the liquidation had already gone through.

The city council ended its contract with Red1 last December after it was decided that EDI Holdings, a government company, would take over Red1.

"The city as sole shareholder determined to place Red1 in liquidation as the change in national strategy on the format of Reds (transferred) these from municipal entities to public entities.

"At this time a resolution has been taken and is in the process of being registered for the voluntary winding-up of Red1," said Muller.

Red1's directors, some earning an annual salary of more than R1.2 million, have been paid out by the city council.

The antagonism that has marked the city's relationship with Red1, since it first agreed to transfer its assets in 2005, continued with Mowzer saying it was "mischievous" for the city to blame liquidation delays on Red1.

The board was sent financial statements at the end of August.

Mowzer was advised by legal opinion that he could not sign the statements as he had been fired. It was recommended that two Red1 board members would sign them off.

Mowzer said the city had had to revise its report, which further delayed the process.

Mowzer said the revised statements were being reviewed by a board member and would be signed off and sent to the city early next week.

anel.powell@inl.co.za

Imizamo Yethu fire under control

DISASTER was averted yesterday when a fire just above the Imizamo Yethu informal settlement in Hout Bay was brought under control barely two hours after it started.

Phumeza Mgxashe, spokesperson for Table Mountain National Park (TMNP), said last night the fire was under control after three helicopters were sent to the area.

"About 3pm we got a call from the Regional Fire Control about the fire," said Mgxashe.

"By 5pm the fire had been brought under control with no houses below facing any threat of being destroyed.

"We had 70 people working to fight the fire, including staff from TMNP, Working on Fire and volunteers. There'll be a team working throughout the night," said Mgxashe.

She said the cause of the fire was unknown. – Staff Writer

AT LEAST 100 CRITICAL POSTS

City housing department battling to fill skills gap

ANÉL POWELL
Metro Writer

THE City of Cape Town's housing department is battling with "critical skills gaps" and urgently needs to fill at least 100 posts to meet service delivery needs.

It would, however, take R18.5 million to fill these posts and this has not yet been allocated in the city's budget.

The department is losing an average of nine staff members a month, and the staff complement has dropped from 781 to 630 in the past year.

Hans Smit, director of housing, said at yesterday's portfolio committee meeting that most of these resignations were from staff in the lower levels of the department. But the loss was people who did "the foot work" for housing.

While many were resigning and moving to the private sector, some were from dismissals or movement to new jobs within the council.

Smit said the department was affected by the national shortage in skilled project managers. The national norm was for one project manager to work on three housing projects. In the city council, the average was seven – and project managers had an extra 10 projects to do in the next financial year.

According to a report submitted to the portfolio committee by Andre Kermis of housing, at

least 35 000 families do not have access to essential services and housing, and the backlog is being exacerbated by new settlements, known as "dormitory housing areas" because there is no integration with other land uses and transport.

The city has 240 informal settlements comprising about 150 000 shacks. In a bid to address the need for proper housing, while battling with staff shortages, the housing department is developing a human resource staffing and development strategy.

There were only 15 trained officials to deal with illegal land occupations. At least 30 more were needed to monitor and prevent land invasions, said Kermis.

"The city will be affected by staffing (issues)," Smit said. Staffing shortages would also affect future projects, such as the upgrading of hostels, the development of new rental houses and repair of existing units.

"Competent and trained staff" would also be needed once the city was accredited as a housing agency, he said.

While some money had been allocated for 19 posts to be filled immediately, a further R18.5m still had to be allocated for the 105 vacant critical posts.

The directorate has suggested that 26 posts from the critical post list are filled annually for the next three years.

anel.powell@inl.co.za



SPIEL BOUND: Lin Sanford (far left), Julie and Jack Knudsen and Steve Sanford, listen under the trees to tour guide Selwyn Davidowitz whose 'exceptional talents' have been awarded by a UK travel magazine. Picture: ALAN TAYLOR

Passionate UK travellers vote city tour guide one of the best

DOMINIQUE HERMAN

CAPE TOWN tour guide Selwyn Davidowitz is one of two best guides in the world, according to Wanderlust, the UK's leading magazine "for people with a passion for travel".

One-man operator, Davidowitz – whose almost 12-hour Cape Town tour takes tourists from the Taal Monument in Paarl to the Kayamandi township near Stellenbosch – was selected from 200 applicants from all over the world, to become a joint gold winner with Romanian tour guide Danut "Dan" Marin, in The Paul Morrison Guide Award 2007.

The winners were selected by a panel that included famed travel writer Bill Bryson;

founder of the *Rough Guides* Mark Ellingham; and BBC television travel presenter and co-creator of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, Michael Palin.

The award was established by Lyn Hughes, Wanderlust co-founder with her husband, Paul Morrison. It was instituted to honour the memory of her husband, who, she said, felt tour guides were the "unsung heroes" of the travel industry.

"It seemed incredible that there wasn't already a global award that acknowledged their exceptional talents," Hughes wrote on the Wanderlust website.

Davidowitz said he would pump the R5 000 bursary he received into the Kayamandi

projects he supports: two crèches, a trash pick-up in exchange for fresh fruit scheme, a soup kitchen and community centre. "I don't do zoo tours. We meet the people."

Not only do the tourists meet the people, they sponsor their children to attend better schools in relationships sustained by Davidowitz through video correspondence.

"Wanderlust has enormous clout. I never realised how much clout," Davidowitz said. "I hope it will put Kayamandi on the map."

Wanderlust readers, whose nominations for best tour guides were solicited, described Davidowitz as "an ambassador for a nation"; "one of the most interesting people we know"; "a mentor";

"a guiding star"; and a "boundless enthusiast".

At the ceremony last month at London's Royal Geographical Society, Davidowitz offered £1 000 of his £5 000 bursary to silver award winner Goyotsetseg "Goyo" Radnaabazar, from Mongolia, because she did not receive a monetary prize.

A representative from the London-based International Youth Foundation – so impressed by this gesture – told Davidowitz that was not necessary because the IYF would give her £2 000 instead.

"On reflection, Selwyn's gesture is no surprise. It epitomises everything that people said about him when they were nominating him for the award," Hughes said.

dominique.herman@inl.co.za

Zille to replace Budlender for city spy probe

ADVOCATE Geoff Budlender will not be conducting the investigation into the City of Cape Town's "spy" affair, Mayor Helen Zille announced yesterday.

"It has come to my attention that advocate Geoffrey Budlender previously provided advice to the legal adviser of the council, Speaker Dirk Smit, regarding a potential interdict of councillor Badih Chaaban," she said in a statement.

"I was not aware of the Speaker's instruction to Budlender at the time that I appointed him to conduct the investigation into the city's actions in this matter, as per my terms of reference," she said.

Zille said Budlender had now brought this to her attention and while she was advised that in law

nothing prevented him from continuing to conduct this investigation, it had been agreed that he would not take on the investigation to avoid any perception of bias by the city or himself.

"I am in the process of appointing an alternative, and I will announce his or her name in due course," Zille said.

The investigation is intended to, among other things, probe whether in hiring George Fivaz and Associates the council was footing a bill that should have been paid by the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Zille is leader of the DA.

The DA initially approached Fivaz for a quote to probe Chaaban, but says it decided not to go ahead when it realised the city was launching its own investigation. – Sapa

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Date:	11 th Dec 2007
Venue:	Langa – eZiko Cooking & Catering Centre, Corner Jungle Walk & Washington Street, Langa
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arts and culture
Department of Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The National Community Arts Centres Awards

The Department of Arts and Culture ran a Community Art Centre Logo Competition between May and June 2007. The purpose of the competition was to create public awareness of community art centres. A wide range of the South African artistic community participated in the competition. The Department received 387 entries. The outcome of the competition is a distinctive logo that will bring all South African community art centres together and brand the art centres' activities and role in development.

The winning logo was selected by a panel of adjudicators. A design by Mr Khumo Moerane, a freelance designer was selected as the winner of the competition.

The logo will be used to brand the Department's National Community Art Centres Awards. All community art centres, art organisations or projects are invited to enter for the competition and thereby stand an opportunity to address challenges that affect the social and economic development of their communities. **The closing date for entries is 10 December 2007.**

The winning logo and the entry form for the awards are available on www.dac.gov.za For more information please call Ms Nicolle Mashigo, tel. (012) 441 3643 or Mrs Suzan Selepe, tel. (012) 441 3471.

ayuda@namp.comunications 11677

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