



Southern African Institute of Forestry, Postnet Suite 329, Private Bag X4, Menlopark, 0102
www.saif.org.za, saif@mweb.co.za

"The times they are a-changin'"

By Hannel Ham

While driving to the University, I was stuck behind a learner driver at 20 km/h. This brought flash backs from many decades ago when K53 was introduced. As one of the first learner drivers to conquer the K53 driving test, I wondered whether it really made a difference on the driving ability of the new generation as we were known back then. In little over 12 months from now I will have the fortune to sit in the passenger seat with my learner driver daughter next to me. As Bob Dylan says, "the times they are a-changin'."

With a cup of coffee, I watched the sunset today and noticed that the leaves are slowly changing colour from green to yellow and the day length is much shorter. Definitely an indication that the seasons are changing.

I recently had a meeting with NISC, the publisher of our journal (Southern Forests: a Journal of Forest Science). They will introduce a new online system for paid up SAIF members in the near future. This will entail that members can create a unique or personalised log-in on the Taylor & Francis website with access to all the previously published volumes (1938 to 2019). Most libraries at academic and research institutions with active subscription to Southern Forests, only have online access to volumes published after 2000. There might be some small problems associated with this new system, but NISC promised to assist us in streamlining the process. To activate this special benefit, members need to be paid up and have a valid email address. It is, therefore, very important that members update their details on the membership database (<http://saif.org.za/member-database/member-area>) to make use of this added benefit. Kindly contact me (hamh@basicr.co.za) if you experience any problems with the login process.

The times are surely changing when we can access 81 years of forestry research papers with the click of a mouse!

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SAIF AGM 2019: Mpumalanga

The **51st SAIF National Annual General Meeting** will be held in Mpumalanga

Date: **Tuesday 9th April 2019**

Venue: **Ingwenyama Lodge**, White River

Time: **17h00 to 19h00**

This will coincide with the Focus on Forestry event, 10 – 12 April 2019 @ Ingwenyama Lodge

Guest speaker: Ruddolph Hoffman, Country Operations Manager at Green Resources in Uganda **"What it means to work as an expat in forestry in Africa"**

Invitations will be sent out to all members soon

Snacks and refreshments afterwards.

Put it in your diary!

LYRICS TO LIVE BY:

№ 236

**"YOU BETTER START SWIMMIN'
OR YOU'LL SINK LIKE A STONE FOR
THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'."**

BOB DYLAN, THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

Continuous Service Award: Mr Michael Howard

Mr Michael Howard is nominated for the SAIF “continuous service excellence award to the forestry industry” for his service in the general field of forest management in the South African forestry industry.

Mike completed his BSc. Forestry degree at Stellenbosch University in 1981 and also holds BSc Honours (1984) and MSc Forestry (1997) degrees from Stellenbosch. He started his career as an Assistant District Forest Manager in the Tsitsikamma (1982 to 1984), progressed to a District Forest Manager for Midlands, KwaZulu-Natal (1985 to 1989) where after he joined Mondi in 1990 and worked as a Silvicultural Project Manager and Technical Manager until he founded Fractal Forest Africa in 1997.



He has developed expertise in a wide range of forest enterprise development and management activities including forest assessment, valuation, mapping, enumeration, planning and yield regulation, site matching and deployment of strategies for various species, hybrids and clones. Mike provides consultation advice to a broad range of clients from small-scale forest owners to large timberland investment companies in South Africa and Africa. This advice is not based on theoretical knowledge alone but also on his extensive practical experience in managing nurseries and timber farms. Recently Mike has been involved in due diligence assessments for potential investors, FSC certification of sustainable forest management and the utilization of forest waste for bio-fuel. He has acted as an expert witness in a number of disputes and has undertaken various assignments both in South Africa and internationally, for government, aid agencies, corporate forestry companies, investors and private farmers.

Mike has been involved in a number of forestry development projects. He assisted the Cata community, the recipients of a successful land claim settlement in the Eastern Cape, in developing an afforestation project based on the conversion of jungle wattle stands. He was also instrumental in assisting a number of forestry service providers in setting up their own businesses. Through his mentorship and assistance, companies such as Nguni Forestry Services (providing inventory services) have become well know service providers in South Africa.

Mike is a lateral thinker and problem solver with the ability to conceptualise practical solutions to forestry problems. He is well known and respected in the South African forestry industry, where he continues to provide excellent service and support as a consultant. This industry will be much poorer without people like Mike Howard.

Specials on SAIF handbooks!

The SAIF is currently running specials on the three handbooks described below. Please contact Corine (details on front page of newsletter) to take advantage of the specials.

1. Fire Manager’s Handbook on veld and Forest Fires:
 - a. Members – R300
 - b. Non-Members – R400
2. SA Forestry Handbook:
 - a. Members – R400
 - b. Non-members – R500
3. There is Honey in the Forest (History book):
 - a. Members – R100
 - b. Non-Members – R150

SAIF Distinguished Forestry Award: Mr. Roger Godsmark

Five years ago, Roger Godsmark was recognized by the S.A.I.F. for his services to the S.A. Forestry Industry, through the awarding to him of its "Continuous Service Excellence Award," an award justifiably earned by Roger. Since then Roger's dedication, contribution and untiring effort to serve and enhance the status of the Forestry Industry has continued apace. 31 years in the uninterrupted service to the Forestry Industry is no mean feat, not emulated by many. Roger's job as Operations Director at Forestry South Africa does not place him on a pedestal or give him any high profile status per se, but what he does quietly and behind the scenes is of inestimable value and importance to the very being and sustainability of the Industry, without which the Industry would be singularly worse off and Forestry South Africa would not be able to achieve what it does on behalf of all who live and work in forestry. In recognition of the role Roger plays and the outstanding contribution that he makes to the South African forestry Industry, I therefore have absolutely no hesitation in nominating him for the S.A.I.F.'s "Distinguished forestry Award."

In backing up his nomination and in the support of the criteria by which "outstanding contribution" can be judged the following motivation is provided.

(1) Equating to International Standards:

South African Forestry has for decades been considered amongst the forefront of countries throughout the world in leadership and innovation in plantation forestry, and much of the work Roger does is to ensure that S.A. Forestry remains a world leader. His involvement in support for Forestry Research, Education and Training, Environmental sustainability issues and Policy and Legislative oversight arenas, are all done with this in mind. Quality and maintenance/ betterment of standards are part of Roger's ethos, with compromise of these not being part of his vocabulary.

(2) Innovative thinking:

Roger's training as an Agricultural Economist from Reading University in England has made him naturally inquisitive and innovative. He is always questioning things, never prepared to just accept such at face value and is forever trying to find ways to do things better and more efficiently. Whilst certainly being conservative for the sake of caution, Roger is always willing to embrace new thinking and approaches and is not afraid of technology advancement and innovation.

(3) Benefit to Forestry Community:

The primary purpose of Forestry South Africa's existence is to be



of benefit to the Forestry Industry and the broader Forestry Community, and Roger's responsibilities as Operations Director is very much geared to ensuring that FSA actually achieves this mandate. Roger's work in promoting the industry and transformation within ranks of the timber grower fraternity bears testimony to this, as does the hugely successful and much admired Small Grower development schemes that have been augmented, supporting in excess of 30,000 small timber

(4) Enhancing the status of the Forestry Profession.

All of the points made above are in one way or another related to and contribute to the maintenance of Professionalism in the Industry and Roger's focus on quality and the maintenance and betterment of standards, as mentioned already, is very much part of this. Roger's involvement in Industry promotion and his exceptional communication skills is also immensely important in the quest to enhance the status of the Forestry Profession.

In summary, Roger has always been 100% dedicated to what he does and will approach any issue, however easy or difficult, with complete determination and an energy that would leave many exhausted. He leaves no stone unturned to achieve absolute excellence and his dedication to serving the Forestry Industry, Forestry South Africa, and to all he works and interacts with, is an example to others.

It has been said by many people that "if anyone wants to know anything about anything in the S.A. Forestry Industry then just ask Roger, and if he doesn't have the answer, he will find it!!" The Industry salutes you Roger.

Find your hidden kid again!

By Rob Thompson

Most people who have had some association with me would know, that, whilst I do not have any interest in firearms or hunting et al, alternative weaponry of all manners certainly does hold a fascination. If it fires a pellet, arrow, dart, stone or derivative thereof, I'm interested. I use the low key word "interested" (sotto voce) so as to not attract the attention of my long suffering wife, in the event that she reads this article and initiates yet another audit of my allegedly expanding arsenal (emphasis mine).

We all know the age old "kettie" and as kids, most of us would have built them from a tree-fork and rubber from an old bicycle tyre, proceeding to then terrorise the neighbours' cat and terminate a few unfortunate windows...never maliciously of course! These activities certainly would not have won you any popularity contests and your home-made "kettie" would have ultimately been retired from duty voluntarily or confiscated by irritated parents (or the neighbours).

Then along came the technologically advanced and totally awesome "wrist rocket" catapult. An aluminium frame with attached surgical rubber tubing for projectile propulsion, a moulded handle for comfortable grip and a fold-away wrist panel providing counter-tension against the wrist for added zing to the shot. Add to this mix a marble or ball-bearing and you were locked and loaded and ready for action.

Then life got in the way and work, family and other responsibilities tended to take the focus away from the simple pleasures once enjoyed. Whilst forestry is full of action men and women partaking in endurance sports (e.g. canoe marathons, 100 milers, MTB epics etc.) many of us choose the road most travelled and our leisure-time physical and recreational activities verge on the rote and what is considered normal (road and trail running, squash, gym etc.) and heaven forbid... social media addiction. The wrist rocket of the past lies deeply buried in some never opened closet, never again to see the light of day, or, an as yet unbroken window!

Great was my elation recently when I discovered that the slingshot (read "kettie") is actually a national sport in many countries. Currently Spain is the holder of the slingshot Wold Cup (achieved in 2018) whilst China is proving to be a strong contender for the title next. Britain is a huge exponent of the sport (with thousands of enthusiasts) and claim that this has absolutely nothing to do with them wanting to move away from their European neighbours.

A quick peek at the equipment used in these top-end international slingshot competitions is mindboggling. Sometimes referred to as "poor man's archery", slingshot sport pundits have adopted an array of skills and equipment in order to be able to drop a coin sized target consistently from 30m distance. In similar fashion to clay pigeon shooting using shotguns, one slingshot event even entails shooting moving clay targets out of the sky.

Youtube will reveal to you a number of experts (including ladies) in the sport capable of lighting a touch strike match hanging from a string from anything up to 20m away. All this is achieved, of

course, though much practice, as well as the ever evolving innovations in the design of the modern slingshot.

In 2010 the slingshot was essentially still the "fork and rubber design" whereupon an American by the name of William Heys developed an interest in trying to modernise the design. Being an expert rifle shottist he was focussed in on accuracy and his work led to innovations such as through-the-fork (TTF) and over-the-top (OTT) frame designs using flat rubber or latex bands for propulsion. The slingshot frame itself has evolved into an ergonomically designed beast literally moulded to the shooters hand and often, believe it or not, incorporates adjustable sights to allow for pin-point accuracy. There is much talk as to the merits or not of various band strengths, lengths and widths, ammunition weight, composition and size, pouch design and band attachment methods. The skill of tying bands to pouch and frame will challenge any fly fisherman worth their salt and the satisfaction of tying a precision band must be akin to that of tying the fly that catches the trophy trout.

As in all sports, there are those participants who prefer the retro approach and well-made and balanced tree-fork slingshots are still finding their way into competition arenas and performing very well against moulded and manufactured frames.

Here in South Africa, slingshot is not a recognised sport, which is a pity, given the traditional interest in the concept. So why even bother to discuss the topic? Well, many forestry practitioners that I know, enjoy spending their spare time working with their hands and creating any manner of useful objects, ranging from pens to furniture, from a wide range of materials. We have access to a wide range of wood types as well as natural forks from both commercial and indigenous trees. The majority of us enjoy the outdoors, sports and both men and ladies gravitate inevitably towards interesting gadgets.

Why not rediscover the kid in you once again and build a slingshot?

There is no real need to compete formally with your creation. The pleasure of researching, designing and building the weapon far outweighs any urge to compete. Becoming competent with it is the real challenge. There is of course also the aspect of doing something (and becoming proficient) in a skill, that is not mainstream, or necessary, but is entirely satisfying. It adds texture to your life and furthers your identity as an outlier in the most positive of manners. Who knows, your creations may even become family heirlooms living on in the hands of your offspring? The one I recently built from a wild olive fork is certainly (in my opinion) a contender for such honour given the attention it is receiving from my daughter and her spouse. Back off...its mine!

Come on practitioners. Relax, forget about work stress and have a bit of fun. Build a weapon with which to assault a can from 16m. Once you can hit it 10 times out of ten give me a call. We'll have a competition!

“The Southern Cape is bleeding to death”

By Jaap Steenkamp

This article appeared in the George Herald on 14 February 2019 and has been adapted with the permission of the author.

Dr Jaap Steenkamp, CEO of the SA Forestry Contractors Association, and a long-standing and loyal member of the Southern Cape branch of the SAIF, wrote this impassioned open letter to George Herald about the dire state of forestry and related industries in the Southern Cape and its severe impact on George, Knysna and Plettenberg Bay.

This is an appeal to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) to drastically revise its policies to save the industry, a vital part of the Southern Cape economy.

There were several devastating fires over the recent few years which affected the Southern and Southeastern Cape namely first the Knysna fires (2017) and then the George fires (Oct. 2018), but also the Tsitsikamma and Longmore fires of 2017 and 2018. The fires are gone, it is starting to green up again, so for the general public all seems back to normal, but the Garden Route, in particular George, Knysna and Plettenberg Bay, are bleeding to death! The economic blood is flowing freely and seemingly everybody fails to see it. It is not business as usual!

Let me explain. During the Knysna and George fires, a total of 18 300ha of plantations were devastated by fires which commercial forestry had no part initiating, but forestry played a huge part containing and putting out these fires.

In the process the regional yield of forest products is calculated (not thumb-suck estimated) to have dropped by a whopping 57%. In real terms, the forest industry and primary supply retracted by nearly 60% – in an instant!



This will more than halve forestry related supplies and inputs from the mentioned towns including plant and equipment, vehicles (light to heavy) spares, chainsaws, machine repairs and maintenance, manufacturing work, firefighting vehicles and equipment, and consumable supplies. Nursery outputs will be halved (exit areas). Weeding and maintenance of fire belts will be halved. (Please start to prepare for the next fiery disaster – it is a few years down the line.).

The fires destroyed jobs, not only forestry jobs (41 forestry contractors and 32 timber growers), but also at sawmills (over and above the 400 people from Geelhoutvlei sawmill), treating plants, suppliers and

engineering / manufacturing outlets i.e the whole forest and forest products industry. A simple count of the number of affected businesses in George alone number 127.

Geelhoutvlei Timbers was laid to waste in the fires last year, resulting in job losses and a huge impact on the Southern Cape timber industry (Photo: Wessel van Heerden)



Timber from hardware outlets and for furniture manufacturing will either not be available or it will be more expensive.

At those entities where jobs are not lost, at the least, sales will drop.

Do we understand the gravity of the situation? In my previous public letter published in the George Herald we had an eloquent response from DAFF and to date nothing else. DAFF did not even attend the early December 2018 meeting to discuss the disaster.

We need a drastic revision of the policies applying to this area. Let us (actually the politicians) stop speaking in vain, but revise the policies now. Some growers declared a force majeure, and yes, it is an emergency situation, so it should be possible to revise these policies.

We need forestry to continue for more than a single pine saw timber rotation, thus approximately for 45 years. We need to postpone exit areas and "handing back to DAFF" for this period with no strings attached, especially no political strings as these strings are time-consuming and will remove the bread from many tables in the affected area. Please politicians, where are you now?

You can contact organised forestry and help our region to survive. At this very point in time, commercial forestry needs your support from a policy and financial point of view. The flipside of this coin is huge unemployment, a huge retraction of expenditure in the area, more poverty and there will be nothing (or a worthless asset) to give to the community. It will most certainly also increase future fire risk.

We need clear thinking for the good of the Southern Cape and to save George and Knysna. The little timber currently remaining is to the east of Knysna. Indeed a deeply worrying situation for our towns.

Upcoming events

- 10–12 April 2019. Focus on Forestry Conference 2019. White River. CMO and Nelson Mandela University. See <http://www.cmogroup.net/cmogroup-conferencing/>

SAIF contact details

President:	Hannel Ham	president@saif.org.za	076 452 5567
Vice-president	Wayne Jones	kzn@saif.org.za	033 330 2455
Past-president:	Andrew McEwan	past-president@saif.org.za	044 801 5022
National secretary:	admin@saif.org.za	admin@saif.org.za	082 523 8733
SF Journal Editor:	Andrew Morris	journal@saif.org.za	033 386 2314
KwaZulu-Natal:	Mmoledi Mphahlele	kzn@saif.org.za	033 329 5415
Gauteng:	Brett Hurley	gauteng@saif.org.za	082 909 3211
Mpumalanga:	admin@saif.org.za	admin@saif.org.za	082 523 8733
Southern Cape:	Braam du Preez	southern-cape@saif.org.za	044 874 0682
Western Cape:	Philip Crafford	western-cape@saif.org.za	021 808 3303
DAFF representative	Tendani Mariba	tendanim@daff.gov.za	012 309 5753

March 2019 birthdays



01-Mar	SCOTCHER J.S.B.	20-Mar	DE KOCK L.S.
02-Mar	KIRKMAN K.E.	20-Mar	NEL A.
04-Mar	BREEDT V.B.	21-Mar	CHRISTIE S.I.
12-Mar	MULLER B.G.	23-Mar	POOLE R.J.
12-Mar	LITTLE K.M.	24-Mar	KANZLER A.
13-Mar	VILANE T.C.	25-Mar	BEPETE F.
13-Mar	CHIVINGE T.	26-Mar	DE BEER A.F.
17-Mar	MUIR I.	29-Mar	STANGER T.
18-Mar	GELDENHUYS C.J.	30-Mar	CELE M.J.
19-Mar	KEYSER V.G.	31-Mar	JACOBS W.S.
20-Mar	GREYLING I.		

Newsletter compiled by Andrew McEwan