

Peace and goodwill at this special time

ONCE again, the Festive Season is upon us – a time of goodwill, giving and love.

It is also a time for us to spend time with our families and loved ones and take a break to reflect on the past year and think about what next year holds for us.

During the Festive Season, let's not forget those less fortunate and share even the little we have with them. Remember the spirit of ubuntu.

We should join hands this Festive Season with a noble resolve to help overcome social ills and strive to restore the moral fibre of our society.

Durban is a holiday city and at this time of the year is filled with tourists and holidaymakers.

I would like to appeal to residents to be patient and friendly.

I would also like to appeal to all road users to be extra vigilant on our roads during this busy time of the year.

The lives of all our citizens are valuable. I urge those who are setting off on holiday to service their motor vehicles, get adequate rest, lay off alcohol, and to obey the rules of the road.



Obed Mlaba
eThekweni Mayor

Drivers who can't run away from the bottle, must ensure they have backup drivers or use a taxi. We have a zero tolerance policy in place in eThekweni.

We have called on our law enforcers to be even harsher during this time. They must arrest all those who want to destroy the good image of our city and endanger the lives and property of others. We will not allow chaos and lawlessness.

At this Christmas time, there is so much to be thankful for. Our city is a place of many cultures and religions and enjoys a time of peace and family over the Festive Season.

I would like to wish all Christians a blessed and sacred time, and to the rest of the non-Christian community, a time of rest and rejuvenation.

May the blessings of this season and the joys that come your way help make your Christmas day truly special. May your Festive Season be joyful and your New Year be one of health, peace and prosperity.

So, this Festive Season, in the spirit of ubuntu, please reach out to your neighbour. Knock on his door and shake hands on a better life for all the people of Durban.

My holiday wish: A more caring city

DURING the festive season, no matter what our religious background, the poor, hungry, and homeless are usually the first that we think about and pray for.

But those who are discriminated against and abused, particularly women and children, are also in our thoughts.

Racism, sexism and xenophobia still permeate our society and we must focus our energies on building nonracialism, nonsexism and a country where all are free.

As city manager I am reminded every day that most of our people are, in different ways, still disadvantaged, discriminated against and hurting from hunger, poverty and disease.

I find myself needing to care, but also have to deal with the concerns of those who prefer not to see the squalor, poverty and hurting, or who have businesses that are negatively affected by vagrants living on the street.

Recent incidents highlight these contradictions.

Our successful hosting of the 2010 Fifa Preliminary Draw attracted the usual comments that we had cleared the streets of all street children.

I checked with Metro Police, who have been instructed by me that they cannot arrest and detain children, and we did no such thing.

In my neighbourhood, throughout the draw, the same groups of 20-30 street children continued to live on the street. These are children who are growing up before my very eyes, but who resist all attempts to help them.

We continue to provide welfare support, but the effects of street life



Michael Sutcliffe
eThekweni Manager

and sniffing glue are hard to counter.

Businesses and many residents continue to ask me to clear them away and while we do provide as much welfare support as we can, they keep

coming back.

Around the same time, a group of residents had been evicted onto the street. It was late and a terrible storm was pelting down.

One person died and we were approached to provide tents to shelter these truly poor people.

We did so as a very short-term measure, but the surrounding residents did not see it that way and criticised us.

This week one of our stormwater drains burst and more than 50 shacks were washed away.

We immediately put up a tent in a park and will provide temporary sanitation services.

We will, through our housing and other programmes, eventually ensure everyone has access to sanitation and shelter, but we cannot do that overnight.

We are trying to be a caring city, but recognise that this has unintended consequences. We will continue to try our best to manage these contradictions, but that requires all who are advantaged to help us to find solutions.

During the holidays let's get recharged so that we can work together to get rid of the pain, hurt, humiliation, discrimination and abuse.

Let's dedicate ourselves to loving our neighbours as we would have them love us. Let's welcome in 2008 with open arms and do everything we can to bring peace, prosperity and love to all in our city, country and continent.

FOLLOW MY LEADER



DRUM majorettes prepare for the finale of their performance at the opening of a new taxi rank in Umbumbulu, on the South Coast. ROMITA HANUMAN took the picture. Send your Durban photographs to eZasegagasi Metro, PO Box 5588, Durban, 4001; or e-mail naidoothrusha@durban.gov.za and we will publish the best high-resolution photos. Please provide your details and the names of the people in your picture

From the deep: Durban's whaling days remembered

SIFISO XULU

IT HAD been more than 30 years since Paul Smith stepped through the doors of the old whaling station on the Bluff that was for 12 years his second home.

Smith worked for the Union Whaling Company, as a crewman on a whale catcher boat and in the whale-processing factory.

He was one of several old whaling hands to visit the remains of the factory as part of an event hosted by the South Durban Basin Area Based Management team in partnership with the eThekweni Library and Museum Departments.

The idea was to bring together retired whalers, members of the Durban South Tourism Route, museum educators, librarians, historians, and the children of late whalers to share stories and information on the whaling industry and discuss ways to preserve the rich history of the whaling that once took place off the coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

Killed

Whaling began here in 1908 and the Union Whaling Company, with its Durban operation located on the sea facing side of the Bluff close to the harbour mouth, quickly became the world's largest land-based whaling company.

Between 1908 and 1975, when the whaling station closed, almost 100 000 of the marine mammals, including giant blue whales, humpbacks and sperm whales were killed off the KZN coast.

They were towed back to shore and loaded into a specially designed flatbed train at the slipway, just inside the bay, and carried the short distance to the whaling station to be processed.

For many attending the reunion,



DOWN MEMORY LANE: Former whaler Paul Smith pays a visit to the ruins of the old whaling station on the Bluff. He was among a group of old whaling hands hosted by the municipality as part of an initiative to preserve the history of the industry

their most vivid memory was of the foul smell of the processing plant.

John MacDonald, a chemist who worked at the station, visited his old laboratory, now dilapidated from the years of exposure to the elements. He described dozens of products that were created using whale parts. Whale meat, whale oil, meat meal, fertilizer, soap, cosmetics, candles, margarines, strings for tennis rackets and perfumes were just a few.

The 22 November event was the first in a series aimed at capturing

the history of whaling, through the collection of information, pictures, records, personal stories and artifacts.

All this information will soon be posted on the internet. In the meantime, those interested are invited to visit the Local History Museum at the Old Court House in Aliwal Street, or stop by the Chicken Shack at 41 Old Mission Road on the Bluff, where owner Dave Neilson has a fascinating collection of photos and artifacts on display.