

# Bryanston East Community Forum

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## Newsletter

July 2008

### Dear members and residents of BECF

Herewith our third newsletter of the year and our apologies once again for taking so long to get it out. We are happy to announce that we have just appointed another full time employee Elfrieda Loubser to help us solve this problem (amongst many others). She will be taking on all the issues around communication with the greater community -everything from newsletters, the web site and community events.

She will be actively trying to get the community involved in all our initiatives, so please support her. Without the active co-operation and support of the residents of Bryanston East, we are not going to grow. As residents you are closer to the ground in terms of upcoming events, be they school functions, church or community events, and we appeal to you to keep the BECF informed of these events so that we can inform the community. Any information including photographs, will gladly be received at our offices in Hobart Road or via email at [elfrieda@becf.co.za](mailto:elfrieda@becf.co.za).

### Safety tips

From a SAPS point of view the months of April, May and June saw crime remain fairly static, with no apparent increase or decline, with the split still at about 70% / 30%, daytime / nighttime. Residential robberies are still a problem, stemming from a lack of security measures, driveway gates being lifted off rails, domestics not being informed about security and the ever-present opportunistic crimes.

Despite all the good intentions by the SAPS and COIN Security, it is still ultimately the responsibility of the residents to "secure their area", and the SAPS request a constant alertness

to crime in all its forms, from vagrancy to more serious matters.

From the household security point of view we all need to ensure that we keep unused access gates to properties locked at all times, approach our homes with remote controls ready, and ensure that all alarm systems are properly maintained and checked regularly, even if it means communicating with your guarding company on a daily basis. It will show them and those around you that you are serious about the security and safety of your family as well as that of your community.

Please also ensure that all members of your household, from children to domestics, are made aware of the relevant people and telephone numbers to contact in the event of an emergency.

Over the next several newsletters, we will also be publishing information from the SAPS manual on Basic Hints on Crime Prevention, which will include matters from personal safety, housebreaking, home-alone kids vehicle checks and hijacking to tips for the elderly, disabled, joggers and cyclists, rape victims and hostages survival.

### Cycle trail along the Spruit

On Monday June 2nd, the BECF met with the local councillor, Vincent Earp, Johannesburg City Parks, and various members of mountain bike clubs in the area headed up by Neil Evans.

This meeting arose out of residents' concern that bikers were using the Spruit for their enjoyment, and that building/alterations were being initiated along the Braamfontein Spruit, in the form of humps and ramps adjacent to the river by the mountain bike clubs. Whilst there has been positive feedback about the cyclists use of the river, the question of the legality of this has been called into question, and it was with this in mind that the meeting was called.

The upshot of the meeting was that the clubs need to follow the correct municipal procedures with regards to construction along the river, via the JCP and the Council. This would include the presentation of an environmental impact assessment relative to the immediate area by the bikers, as well as a report on the impact to local residents, the maintenance of existing features, construction methods and correct signage. Once this has been accomplished, the complete report will be handed over to the council and the JCP for their perusal and input.

### Environmental issues

Linked to the mountain bikers and their goals, the BECF recently met with a local resident, Simon Bannister, a young and passionate man who is currently involved in environmental issues relative to the Braamfontein Spruit and its entire ecological future.

He and his brother have formed a company called "RE", a recycling awareness company, and at the beginning of June organized a group walk along the Spruit, in which about 20 people from all walks of life embarked on a 25km walk starting out the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens and finally ending up at the confluence of the Sandspruit in Paulshof.

What started out as a beautiful walk amongst equally beautiful surroundings, soon deteriorated and there are sections, that we are all aware of, where squatters live and carry out their daily ablutions and weekly washing.

Simon's issue is that whilst we live in one of the most affluent municipalities in the country, we hide behind massive security walls and turn a blind eye to the destruction that is occurring in our river system. We, as the residents, should be leading the way and setting an example for other areas to follow.

In our next newsletter, the BECF will publish their recommendations and solutions to this very real problem.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- Metro Emergencies, Ambulances, Accidents - 011 375 5911
- Police - 10111
- Fire - 10177
- Sandton Police Station - 011 722 4200/4355
- Victim Support - 082 774 7564
- Inspector Lee Ramdiyil - 083 775 4674
- Coin Control Room - 086 180 7000
- Coin Vehicle - 082 053 3547
- Coin Vehicle - 082 461 5054
- Coin Vehicle - 082 825 3763
- Coin Vehicle - 082 336 2805
- Joburg Connect (City Council, parks, water, electricity) - 011 375 5555
- Electricity Eskom - 086 003 7566
- Water (24 hour help line) - 011 688 1500



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## COIN Update

The past few months have been rather eventful in the BECF area. Crime has proven to be increasingly violent, with shooting incidents occurring more regularly. An example of this is the incident which occurred in early April in West Hertford Road which resulted in a shootout between robbers and a Protea Coin Armed Reaction officer. Fortunately the ARO was not injured. The incident resulted in the death of one of the robbers and the arrest of another three. Investigations by the Police resulted in another two arrests in connection with this incident.

A week later another incident occurred in St Audley Road when a Security officer was wounded by armed robbers when he inadvertently walked into an armed robbery in progress. Fortunately he was not seriously injured but the robbers managed to escape. There were also a number of armed robberies which occurred in the area which did not result in shootings. Despite the disturbing increase in violent crimes in the area, Bryanston has still been relatively quiet compared to some of the neighboring suburbs with the entire Sandton having shown a dramatic increase in violent crime.

The incidence of violent crime resulted in even more co-operation between Protea Coin and the SAPS. Through the past few months there have been a number of joint operations involving Security personnel and the SAPS, focusing on green belt areas and vacant properties. The SAPS do not have the available resources to launch ongoing crime prevention operations and thus they rely heavily on the support of the security companies. Protea Coin personnel will be increasing their involvement in these joint operations in the Bryanston area.

On a personal note, Les has left Protea Coin and the BECF and been replaced by JP Kuijper, who is known to some of the residents as he has been with the company for a number of years.

JP can be contacted on 082-826-8297, or at [kuijperj@proteacoin.co.za](mailto:kuijperj@proteacoin.co.za).

## SAPS - BASIC TIPS ON CRIME PREVENTION

1. Know all emergency numbers by heart.
  2. If in doubt about the safety of an area, call your police station for advice.
  3. Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you.
  4. Try not to walk in remote places at night.
  5. Know the neighborhood in which you live and work.
  6. Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals and restaurants, or late night convenience stores.
  7. Trust your instinct! If something or someone makes you uneasy, avoid the person or leave as soon as possible.
  8. When walking or driving, inform someone on your destination beforehand, no matter the distance or time you expect to be gone for.
  9. Limit night-time trips, and try not to travel alone. If this cannot be helped, drive with your hazard lights on.
  10. Look out for people loitering in your vicinity - this could be a sign that you are about to be robbed or attacked.
  11. If a stranger wants to use your home phone, and you want to assist, leave them outside and phone on their behalf.
  12. Never admit to a stranger that you are alone!
  13. In the event of mugging, DO NOT RESIST, especially if the perpetrator is armed. Give up your valuables with no questions asked and move away as soon as it is safe to do so.
  14. Have your local police station telephone number on speed dial, or at the very least, pre-set your home phone for redial.
  15. Do not wear extravagant jewelry in public.
  16. Avoid carrying large sums of money.
  17. Carry handbags close to your body, and not dangling by their straps. Wallets should be placed in front pockets or inside of jackets.
  18. Avoid suspicious money-making schemes.
  19. Maintenance of security lights is an important aspect of theft prevention and assault, on both interior and exterior parts of buildings, carports, stairs, patios and alleyways.
  20. Keep firearms in a good quality safe.
  21. Never live a firearm unattended in a vehicle.
  22. Do not leave clothes on a washing-line overnight.
  23. Avoid using a Laundromat in an apartment complex alone, especially at night.
  24. Avoid wearing shoes or clothes that restrict your movement.
  25. When leaving your home for long period, do not mention this on your answering service.
  26. Never carry ID tags on your car or house keys.
  27. When shopping, never leave your handbag in the trolley, or on the counter when paying for your goods.
  28. Should you require the toilet in a shopping mall, always keep the door locked
- If you feel unsafe -walkout!

## Along the spruit (2)

The Braamfontein spruit has supported a number of different recreational activities over the years. Many organization have, down the years promoted and protected the area from Melville Koppies all the way to Leeukop.

James Clarke, well known columnist for the Star, was very involved in the 1970s and 1980s in promoting the use of the parkland along the spruit for all manner of recreation. James has been kind enough to lend me his file of press clippings from this period. In 1971 he found "100 tons of builders and household rubbish along the spruit." but in 1975 he reports that "the Sandton Nature Conservation Society together with 200 to 300 willing residents had cleared about 5km of the river banks". The Police had tentatively agreed to mounted patrols along the river at weekends. Bird sanctuaries and fish stocking were under discussion.

During the 1980s there were regular annual Spruit days. The last of these that I have information of was in 1988. There were activities planned that ranged from botanical displays to Balloons, Restaurants, Boy Scout bridge building, aerobics, a fly past and both horse and walking trails.



It seems that ideas for the reverent area and the problems associated with maintaining it have not changed. The need for preservation of the area remains.

Andrew Murray

[www.riverrangers.org.za](http://www.riverrangers.org.za)

## River Rangers

The Johannesburg Voluntary Mounted River Rangers in their bright yellow bibs are regularly to be seen by walkers and cyclists along the spruit. Indeed, in the first six months of 2008 the rangers mounted 306 patrols from bases at Riverpark and Paulshof - that is almost twelve per week. Most of these patrols ride through the Bryanston Area. There are more than thirty dedicated volunteer patrol riders. The use of horses provides a very good way of patrolling parklands in an eco-friendly way.

The river rangers are not a law enforcement agency. Each patrol, however, on return to base faxes a report to SAPS so that police are kept informed about the movement of squatters and any other criminal related issues. This is a help towards combating squatting along the river which has become a problem in recent years. Rangers also report issues of illegal dumping of water from the spruit and other issues to City Parks and Pikitup. They report on sewerage leaks to Johannesburg Water and blocked bridges to Johannesburg Roads Department and Gautrans. Most times, the relationship which the rangers have built up with these agencies results in action. Not infrequently, rangers have found stolen goods such as wallets, drivers licences and bank cards and have been able to return these to relieved owners.



River rangers also involve themselves in community projects such as Reach for a Dream and in river cleanups.

More information about the rangers as well as copies of monthly reports can be found on their website: [www.riverrangers.org.za](http://www.riverrangers.org.za)

## SAFETY TIPS FOR JOGGERS AND CYCLIST



1. Jog or cycle with a known companion, and in a familiar area.
2. Do not jog or cycle in a secluded area, or after dark.
3. Always jog in the face of oncoming traffic.
4. If followed, go to the nearest house and call the police.
5. Always wear brightly coloured clothing to improve your visibility.
6. Carry a whistle to summon help in the event of an attack.
7. Vary your route and pattern of running or cycling.
8. Always be alert of your surroundings, and keep alert.
9. Avoid jogging or cycling along routes that offer lots of concealment to attackers.