



April 9, 2009.

REFERENCE: Booktown Richmond

Good Afternoon Karoosters,

I trust that this finds you all fine and looking forward to the long Easter weekend.

Recently we attended the first Karoo Convention put together by Doreen Atkinson from Philippolis. It was a fantastic gathering of the Karoo Clan and coming together of likeminded Karoosters. Our Karoo is the back water and outback of our country and the only way it will survive and indeed flourish is if we ensure its future through our own efforts and initiatives.

The convention was a boon for our Richmond Book Fair 2009 edition in that we managed to secure some of South Africa's best known and loved Karoo writers, viz. Etienne van Heerden, Rose Willis and Antoinette Pienaar, who join; Denis Becket, Rian Malan (launching his new book he hopes) David Bullard, Lawrence Green, Mannetjies Roux, Dana Snyman, Annatjie Reynolds, Stephen Grey, Stephen Welz, Jeff Klass, Fanie Olivier, Angie Butler, and Tymon Smith (Literary Editor Sunday Times). I think that we can boast a more impressive line up of speakers than even the Franschoek Book Fair!! Not too shabby for the Great Northern Cape I reckon.

In addition to the speakers during the day, we plan as well to have round table discussions in the evenings, with four or five of the writers discussing writing in general as well in particular, each his/her own style. Each evening will feature a different group of writers and would be a wine and cheese affair to ensure that a very sociable evening is enjoyed by all. Many people have expressed an interest in the notion of being able to ask our famous writers questions as regards their own writing styles and modes of expression. We are all looking forward to this immensely.

On another front we are moving ahead with the literacy project in which we are getting the kids interested in the written word by reading stories to them before they get their lunch at the soup kitchen which we operate at the Richmond Community Centre.



Michael Drysdale Resident Story Teller

Every day there are more children (last count was 65) eager to be entertained with stories and we are now fortunately in a position to start lending them books to take home. It would be a sad irony were the children of South Africa's only Booktown to be deprived of an inexhaustible supply of good books, which we are pleased to say we now have.

If anyone happens to have books which you no longer want we are more than happy to give them a good home. We are in the process of setting up a Karoo Study Centre which will have as good a collection of Karoo literature as we can get our hands on. We are even happy to keep books on "permanent loan" should this be a preferable arrangement. Your great grandchildren can always claim them back!

As the result of some good contacts made at the Karoo Convention, Darryl David has secured an undertaking that the University of the Free State will be opening an Afrikaans book shop in the village and that they will get an involvement as well from the Library Department.

Programming is in the initial stages and I shall get it to you in due course, so no stress!

Please refer to the dorp's website www.richmondnc.co.za for contact details of the B&B's. If you would like to stay on a nearby farm....as nearby as things are in the Great Karoo, please contact Anneke Bezuidenhout at anra@webmail.co.za

If you know someone who would like to be placed on the mailing list please have him/her contact me. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list: idem.

All the best,

Peter Baker

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