



GOING GLOBAL: Dario Eberhard, left, a family friend, with the Schwörer family – Dario Schwörer, Noé, Salina, Sabine holding seven-month-old daughter Alegra, and Andri. The family is on a voyage they started nine years ago to educate people about climate change around the world. Picture: MARK ANDREWS

# Swiss family sail with sun and wind

Teaching people about climate change as they go

By POLISWA PLAATJIE

A SWISS family has spent the last nine years travelling by wind and solar-powered boat to educate people on climate change, trying to make the world greener – one country at a time.

Dario and Sabine Schwörer, a climatologist and nurse, and their four children have been on a Toptop Global Climate Expedition since 2002 and have to date visited more than 50 countries.

They sailed into the East London harbour for a quick stop at the weekend.

Their yacht, Pachamama, an Incan word for 'Mother Earth' – is equipped with 11 solar panels and two wind turbines. They depend solely on solar energy to drive the yacht, charge phones and keep the fridge running.

Speaking to the Dispatch yesterday, the couple said they embarked on the voyage

when they noticed the impact of climate change in Europe and wanted to raise awareness. They began their trip in Europe nine years ago and from there set sail for the Caribbean.

They've already clocked up 42 613 nautical miles, climbed more than 400 000 vertical metres, cycled more than 18 000km and visited more than 50 000 students across the world. The couple's four children were all born on the expedition.

Salina, 6, and Andri, 5, were born in Chile, two-year-old son Noé in Australia and seven-month-old Alegra in Singapore.

In each country, they visit schools and educate children about the impact of climate change. "We want to show that one can enjoy nature through sport but at the same time give something back. They can help by clean-up campaigns," said Dario.

The family arrived in South

Africa on November 11 and were met by a group of Zulus, who danced and sang traditional songs when they docked in Durban for the COP17 climate change conference. "We have never seen people expressing their feelings through dance and music like that, it was beautiful," said Dario.

The Toptop campaign, together with the office of KwaZulu-Natal agriculture, environmental affairs and rural development department, KZN Wildlife and the Wild Lands Trust, organised an awareness walk on November 18 to mark the 10 days countdown to COP17. "Over 400 people joined us and after an hour of marching, the mayors of Richards Bay and the uThungulu district planted two trees at uMhlatuze Civic Centre," said Dario.

While educating the world about climate change, the couple still have to make sure their kids receive a more

conventional education.

Sabine said the children are home-schooled but when they are not working on their books, they are watching movies using a solar-powered video player.

"Everything on our yacht uses solar power."

The couple had hoped to visit a couple of schools in South Africa but when they arrived most were winding down for the holidays.

So instead, they decided to be part of the climate change conference in Durban.

The family head to Port Elizabeth today where they will spend a couple of days before sailing on to Cape Town.

"We hope we will be in Cape Town before Christmas," said Sabine.

Travelling with the family is Dario Eberhard, a friend who joined them in Richard's Bay and who is also heading for Cape Town. — [poliswap@dispatch.co.za](mailto:poliswap@dispatch.co.za)

# First female port diver for EL

By LINDILE SIFILE

RATANANG Maremane may have missed an opportunity to become a pilot but after overcoming her fear of swimming, and surviving a gruelling naval course, she is now East London's first woman diver to work for Transnet.

Originally from Soweto, Maremane recently moved to the coast where she joined the Transnet National Port Authority (TNPA) as a commercial diver.

The 27-year-old will be working with two male divers and her job will include inspecting water assets underwater and above [boats, tugs, etc], repairing quay walls, steel structures and breakwalls at the port.

"Being a black girl from inland [Soweto], I didn't know anything about swimming. In fact, I was

scared of swimming. But I'm happy with where I am and what I have achieved and this certainly challenges stereotypes that black people can't swim," she said yesterday.

Maremane, who played netball for the SA under-19 team in 2003, is the fourth qualified overall female diver in the history of the SA Navy and the second qualified black female diver. She is, however, the first woman diver to be based in East London working for Transnet.

She said the lack of knowledge and poor marketing of maritime courses was behind the shortage of, in particular, black divers.

"I think black females see diving as too intense and that is because black youth generally is not too acquainted with maritime environment and courses offered.

"To be honest, there's job space

that needs to be filled in maritime and there are so many opportunities in this field, but people don't know that because it is not being communicated to them."

TNPA spokesman Terry Taylor confirmed that Maremane was a rare breed. "The guys were excited when they learnt that a young black girl was going to join them. It was an eye-opener for them to see her diving," said Taylor.

The engineering science undergraduate was appointed in East London in November after a two-year stint with the SA Heritage Resources Agency as a research project coordinator.

In 2010, she was chosen to represent South Africa in Florida as part of the Slave Wrecks Project (to identify and preserve shipwrecks, etc, related to the global slave trade).

However, Maremane said it has not been an easy journey for her.

After completing Grade 12 she applied for a pilot learnership programme with the SA Defence Force and qualified to take part in the Youth Foundation Development Programme.

After a number of assessments she was instead appointed to join the SA Navy as a recruit.

"I had no knowledge or interest in the SA Navy at the time. I then attended a diver presentation and that caught my eye."

A group of 50 unsuccessful candidates, all from disadvantaged backgrounds, were put on a three-month diving enablement programme. Maremane was the only successful female in the group of 15 that was selected to work for the SA Navy before her contract ended in 2008. — [lindiles@dispatch.co.za](mailto:lindiles@dispatch.co.za)

# Medical students celebrate in KWT

By MICHAEL KIMBERLEY

MORE than 300 medical students who completed their studies at the expense of the Eastern Cape health department celebrated their achievements at a "congratulation celebration" in King William's Town yesterday.

Of the 327 students awarded full bursaries from the department, 23 recently returned from Cuba, where they had studied medicine for five years.

The Cuban-taught students will now complete their practical training and sit their final exams at a South African medical university.

The 327 students studied for qualifications ranging from doctors to pharmacists and even dentists.

Yesterday's function was attended by the students, a handful of parents and superintendent-general for health Dr Siva Pillay.

Pillay told the graduates: "The money for your studies did not come from my pocket. It came from the taxpayers of the Eastern Cape, so you must go back and serve your communities."

He instructed the Cuban-trained students not to stifle the ideals and ideas they were taught while in the Caribbean country.

"It will be hard to adjust from the warm environment you were offered in Cuba but don't forget you are coming from a superior university," he told the 23 students.

Speaking to all the students, Pillay said: "You must all listen during your internships and while working. Don't think you are superior to a nurse. Remember some of them have years of experience and know more than you."

It cost the department R91-million



BACK TO SERVE COMMUNITY: Cuban-trained medical students Tandisa Ntshiba, left, and Geinumuzi Ntsokotha at the 'congratulation celebration' in King William's Town yesterday. Picture: YANDISA MONAKALI

to push the 327 medical practitioners through medical school. This figure has increased to R108m for the coming year.

Pillay predicted that in the next four years the number of those who will pass their studies while on a bursary from the department will be over 1 000.

After completing their internships the students will have to work for the department for the same length of time they spent studying.

Bursaries were handed out to the best students in the 27 sub-districts of the Eastern Cape.

Doctor-in-training Geinumuzi Ntsokotha, who returned from Cuba this month, said while abroad they were taught to put the community first and forget about the money associated with doctors.

"We have been taught to work for the people. The Cuban doctors taught us primary preventive health-care as opposed to curative health-

care, which is taught in South Africa," said Ntsokotha.

Backing up his studies, the 26-year-old said preventive care would benefit communities more as almost 80% of common diseases in South Africa were preventable.

Tandisa Ntshiba, also recently back from Cuba, agreed.

"After completing the training in South Africa we will have the best of both worlds," said Ntshiba. — [michaelk@dispatch.co.za](mailto:michaelk@dispatch.co.za)

# Morgan Bay water woes 'being addressed'

By SHANAAZ PRINCE

AFTER three days of water shortages, Morgan Bay residents are a little more at ease as the problem is now receiving attention.

The sudden drought came at an unfortunate time for the popular seaside village as the festive season has just kicked off and visitors from around the country are arriving.

Morgan Bay resident Alan Schley said the problem arose because water pumps in the village were not being maintained.

"Three of the four pumps have not been working for 18 months already, and only now that it's becoming problematic is something being done

about it," said Schley.

The shortages which, according to Schley, started last Thursday afternoon, are now being addressed as Amathole district municipality (ADM) began carting water with tankers to the reservoir to ensure a sufficient water supply.

Infrurated residents and business owners said they had been left in the lurch over the long weekend as many complained their water had been "cut off" without any prior notice.

They had to buy bottled water or use water stored in rainwater tanks at their homes.

The owner of the Morgan Bay Hotel, Richard Warren-Smith, said

the crisis had been taxing on his business as clients had started threatening to leave his hotel.

"It's much better since Sunday, which was probably the worst day of the shortages," he said.

"People threatened to leave but keeping them in the know about what is going on helps. It's just unfortunate because it's something that's completely out of our control."

According to Warren-Smith, the municipality was playing "catch-up" in an effort to solve the problem by turning off water supply at night as a way of reducing water usage and the amount of water lost through leaks.

But service delivery problems have become common in the village.

Warren-Smith said other incidents included leakages not being fixed speedily by ADM, and a battle with refuse removal which resulted in trash in the village piling up.

He said that when he asked the municipality about the water shortages, he was told it had been caused by a "communication" problem between an electrical panel and the water pumps, which were crucial to providing the village with water daily.

Contacted for comment, ADM spokeswoman Judy Ngoyoi said the relevant municipal officials dealing with the matter were not available and she could not comment. — [shanaazp@dispatch.co.za](mailto:shanaazp@dispatch.co.za)

# Protector steers clear of info bill battle

PUBLIC Protector Thuli Madonsela on Monday rejected a request from the media to investigate the state's arguments on the Protection of State In-

formation Bill. Madonsela's office said she was deliberately distancing herself from the civil rights campaign against the contentious bill to prevent her office from coming under political suspicion and attack.

She said in a statement: "I have decided to advise the civil society entities that approached me for assistance to directly engage with the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) independently of me. "I will accordingly write to them and articulate my position."

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) had asked Madonsela to investigate claims that no country has a public interest defence

in its official secrecy legislation, and that those proposing one are foreign agents.

It wanted her to test the veracity of the first position and, if it was not the case, to establish whether it "was a bona fide mistake or it was an intention to mislead".

Sanef had also asked her to investigate whether a statement made by State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele that those who opposed the bill were proxies funded by foreign spies, was protected by parliamentary privilege and had in fact been said in parliament.

The request came at a time when Madonsela was already under fire from ANC chief whip Mathole Motshekga for writing to Speaker Max Sisulu about the bill. — [Sapa](mailto:Sapa)

## Clarification

THE Daily Dispatch reported on Friday on a meeting of the provincial general council of the ANC.

The ANC has clarified that while provincial secretary Oscar Mabuyane's report to the PGC did draw objections, it was not formally rejected and that its referral to commissions was routine. — [DDR](mailto:DDR)

SA Airways		Flight Times		Departures	
<b>Arrivals</b>				IT601 Cape Town.....1200	IT328 Johannesburg.....1835
SA1301 Durban.....0715	SA0462 Johannesburg.....0820	SA1304 Johannesburg.....0950			
SA1371 Cape Town.....0725	SA1404 Johannesburg.....1125	SA1304 Durban.....1205			
SA0480 Port Elizabeth.....0745	SA0476 Johannesburg.....1205	SA1366 Cape Town.....1205			
SA0459 Johannesburg.....0750	SA1366 Cape Town.....1205	SA1378 Cape Town.....1400			
SA1403 Johannesburg.....0915	SA1306 Durban.....1505	SA1306 Durban.....1505			
SA0471 Johannesburg.....1130	SA1368 Cape Town.....1610	SA1368 Cape Town.....1610			
SA1365 Cape Town.....1135	SA0480 Johannesburg.....1720	SA0480 Johannesburg.....1720			
SA1377 Cape Town.....1225	SA0489 Port Elizabeth.....1735	SA0489 Port Elizabeth.....1735			
SA1305 Durban.....1425	SA1308 Durban.....1845	SA1308 Durban.....1845			
SA1367 Cape Town.....1540	SA1410 Johannesburg.....2020	SA1410 Johannesburg.....2020			
SA0475 Johannesburg.....1650	SA1370 Cape Town.....2025	SA1370 Cape Town.....2025			
SA0486 Durban.....1715					
SA1307 Durban.....1800					
SA1409 Johannesburg.....1950					
SA1369 Cape Town.....1950					
SA0481 Johannesburg.....2030					
<b>Departures</b>					
SA0460 Johannesburg.....0640					
SA1302 Durban.....0750					
SA1372 Cape Town.....0805					
SA0481 Port Elizabeth.....0805					
<b>ITime</b>					
<b>Arrivals</b>					
IT602 Cape Town.....1110					
IT327 Johannesburg.....1805					

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### WEATHER TODAY

**Eastern Cape (Eastern Half)**  
 Cloudy and warm becoming partly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms along the extreme north eastern parts.

Traveller's Weather	min	max
Bloemfontein	15	28
Johannesburg	19	28
Pretoria	20	29
Durban	20	26
Polokwane	16	29
Kimberley	17	32
Uptington	18	41
Cape Town	17	32
George	13	25

**Yesterday's Weather**  
 Max temp: 26°C  
 Min temp: 18.5°C  
 Discomfort index: 30°C  
 Barometer: 1016.9 hPa (increasing)  
 Wind: 22 knots (SSW)  
 Rain (at 8am): Nil  
 Humidity: 52%  
 Sea: 17°C

Source: South African Weather Service

**KEY**  
 Light wind Moderate Strong wind  
 Fresh wind Calm wind

**Moon Phases**  
 December 25 New Moon  
 January 01 First Quarter  
 January 09 Full Moon  
 January 16 Last Quarter

**December Tides**  
 High Low High Low

Tue 20	1155	0517	1832
Wed 21	0039	0637	1302
Thu 22	0144	0740	1359
Fri 23	0237	0833	1449
Sat 24	0324	0920	1535
Mon 25	0407	1004	1617

Sunrise 0456  
 Sunset 1915

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