

Dear Museum Friends

“The time has come to think outside the box”

Can you count on how many occasions you were confronted by this coined phrase? The phrase is used to inspire people, teams, employees, friends, family and the like to novel, innovative and different ways of thinking. Apparently it is the recognition of a quality idea and the perception that nothing is carved in stone. To think outside the box means to find the status quo unacceptable and to keep on trying to interpret and find new ways of looking at the old.

According to Ed Bernacki who wrote an article on Thinking Outside the Box, it requires different attributes: Willingness to take new perspectives to day-to-day work, openness to do different things and to do things differently, focusing on the value of finding new ideas and acting on them, striving to create value in new ways, listening to others but also supporting and respecting others when they come up with new ideas.

Can you see where I am leading with this? Although the cliché is very much in use in management circles and especially in the government, we, at the Graaff-Reinet Museum, have decided to explore and to look further than the obvious. It has come to be a

very rewarding experience and hopefully thinking outside of the box will not land us in another box, the one that is planted six feet under.

Instead of sitting with our hands in our hair about our dire financial situation, we decided to take matters into our own hands. Our special fundraising effort, which became known as A Night at the Museum, received praise from all over, especially the Heritage SA conference delegates who visited Graaff-Reinet in October. Due to popular demand we happily agreed to put our costumes on and to perform Another night at The Museum on 3 December 2010. This, of course, will be the final performance of 2010. Please remember, tickets are limited and we will only put on another performance at the end of 2011.

This museum has been blessed with unconventional, hard working people. We became sick and tired of complaining about our lack of money to do much needed maintenance. Each year we saw our buildings falling further and further into disrepair and each year the prospect of doing maintenance work became more daunting. A ‘light-bulb’ moment inspired us to put our male staff members to the test. And what a magnificent result! Our buildings look shiny and new, the dazzlingly white-washed walls catch the early morning

rays of sun, the green doors and shutters are open in invitation, the public is happy and we are much more enthusiastic about our working environs. Just shows what thinking outside of the box can do.

The word 'Bazaar' is derived from Middle Persian referring to a *bahachar* meaning 'the place of prices'. In the South African context the word has a somewhat different meaning and is associated with charitable fundraising events and a social gathering around a food table. With this in mind as well as the mouth-watering images of homemade delights such as milk tart and koeksisters, please come to the Museum Bazaar which will be held on Friday, 10 December at the Old Library Museum. Bring your friends for a chat and a visit to the museum and treat them to a home made scone and a nice cup of Earl Grey in our Bazaar Tea Garden. Board Members, staff and the Friends of the Museum will be doing the rounds to ask for donations or something to put on our White Elephant table. Please do not show them the door. We need your support, there is so much that needs to be done at the Museum. We are trying our very best to come up with new ideas and we urge you to do the same.

I am very sure that Mrs Marie Biggs would have organized the Bazaar in a jiffy, reigns firmly in hand. Mrs Biggs diligently served the museum as a board member for many many years. Our records show that she was a board member of the Graaff-Reinet Museum as early as 20 May 1985. Board members came to rely on her knowledge and her expertise especially with regard to fundraising. Even after she resigned as board member, she took the lead in organizing the street stall. The community knew that every December Mrs Biggs will be doing the rounds collecting donations for the street stall and encouraging people to support this venture. We miss her terribly.

We were also very sad to hear that Mr Alex Carty bid this world farewell. Mr Carty served on the Board as a board member for some years, but later became chairman of the board. He will always be remembered for his enthusiasm to learn more about the origin of the houses in Cypress Grove. I will always remembered him for his compassion, understanding and tongue-in-the-cheek sense of humour.

I cannot believe that the year has come to the end. Thank you all for your support. As always, it is much appreciated and something we all agree, we cannot do without. Season's

greetings and a prosperous New Year

Anziske

SPILLER RE-VISITED

To give a true and meaningful picture of the night Charles James Spiller was murdered, I had to get my facts straight for our Night at the Museum performance. Spiller's murder has been bothering me for quite some time and although Mr Johnnie Look gave a marvellous account of what has occurred, I wanted to read for myself what the Graaff-Reinet Herald of 1866/67 reported. In those days the newspapers were of course a reliable source of information and as such I trusted that the reporting would give a true, although not very objective, account of what occurred on the night of 13 May 1866.

The Graaff-Reinet Herald was published twice a week and the final issue of that week came out the Saturday before Spiller's murder. The murder was quite the talk of the town and necessitated a supplementary issue to Saturday's edition, May 12, 1866.

According to the 1866 newspaper, Mr Spiller and his wife retired to bed quite late, about 10h30 that night or it could have been later. Their daughter was residing with her parents at the time, and when Spiller heard a noise

outside, she accompanied him to the window, not armed with a fire arm as we were made to believe for some time. Four homemade spears were thrown at Mr Spiller and not two as we always thought. Startled by the first spear that was hurled through the window, the 75 year old gentlemen did not expect to dodge a second, third and fourth spear. The second spear injured his hand and, paralysed with surprise and fear, he was a helpless target who found himself with a third spear embedded deep into his abdomen.

Spiller's daughter, Mrs Oertel, immediately ran to the front door and shouted for help. Mr Weinthal was the first person on the scene, followed by Prof Guthrie, Mr Southey, Mr Pettite and a Mr Powell. Dr Maasdorp came and put his surgical knowledge to the test to save Spiller's life. The unfortunate gentleman felt so much better after Dr Maasdorp's administrations that Mr Buyskes the Clerk of Peace was called to take his testimony.

During the night Spiller's condition took a turn for the worse. Rev Steabler spent some time with him in anticipation of his speedy removal to the world of realities'. On Monday, 14 May 1866, at 21h00 that evening, Mr Spiller passed away. He suffered terribly and his decease resulted from

internal hemorrhage, 'causing inflammation and mortification.

As Mr Loock reported, the thieves got away during the commotion and the efforts to save Spiller's life, but the footprints in the garden suggested that there were four perpetrators. Those of you who know your Graaff-Reinet history will know that a big search commenced to find the killer. We always assumed that the hat found on a wheelbarrow next to the wall that the killers used to climb over, was one of the leading pieces of evidence. Unfortunately it only had the label of the shop where it was bought inside and although it was believed that the shop owner would be able to lead the police to the killer, it was a dead end. A transport driver also reported that three non-white men came to him asking for tobacco. In his testimony he observed that one was without a hat. He immediately assumed that he came face to face with the killer. What gobbledegook!

Mr Spiller's death were mourned by family and friends, although very little was said about his wife's reaction. People plead for extra policemen to be put on duty and claim that they could not find safety and protection against murder in their own houses. The Clerk of Peace were urged to become more pro-active. He

eventually placed and advertin the newspaper promising a reward of £50 to anyone who had additional information. Mr Alfred Thronton, a very concerned friend of Mr Spiller, appealed to the non-white members of the Graaff-Reinet community and promised them a reward of one sheep and two chickens for any valuable information.

Mr Spiller's killer was never found although some believed that Jan Botma *alias* Bertram was responsible for the murder. In 1867, The Graaff-Reinet Herald published an article which appeared in The Somerset Courant claiming that Bertram was found and that he had a locket engraved with Spillers name. Apparently he also admitted, to a fellow prisoner in January 1867, that he concluded his list of evil doings with the murder of Spiller. The Graaff-Reinet Herald cocluded the article by saying that the article in above-mentioned newspaper contained many irregularities. There were no substantial evidence to connect Bertram to the murder, the locket found in his posseion was not engraved with Spiller's name nor was the locker identified. As to the alleged confession to a fellow prisoner Bertram was not emprisoned during January 1867. The story was the result of rumours running rife.

With this, I happily conclude my investigation of the death of Charles James Spiller.

DIE NUWEJAARS-DAG TREINRAMP VAN 1924

Mnr Giel Nel van Krugersdorp het onlangs navraag gedoen oor 'n grafsteen in die Cradockstraat-begraafplaas met 'n baie interessante grafskrif: *To the memory of Nurse Anna Maria van Rooyen, born 17 February 1899, killed in train disaster in Graaff-Reinet on 1 January 1924. She died as she lived – serving others.* Natuurlik is my nuuskierigheid geprikker en het die soektog begin. Ek het die volgende uitgevind:

“Nêrens in die geskiedenis van Graaff-Reinet is daar bewyse van 'n so 'n aaklige katastrofe soos die een wat op Dinsdag, 1 January 1924, plaasgevind het nie. Vroeg-oggend, ongeveer 03h18 het 'n trein op pad van Middelburg die spoor naby die Lokasie byster geraak. Die ongelukkig het min of meer 'n myl van die Graaff-Reinet satsie plaasgevind in binne 'n kort rukkie na die ongeluk het die klok op Markplein koorsagtig gelui sodat al wat Graaff-Reinetter hulle na die toneel gehaas het om hulp te verleen. Drs Massey en Bremner was eerste

op die toneel asook Inspekteur Lloys Lister van die plaaslike Polisie. Blykbaar het die twee passasiers waens wat die agterhoede van die trein met tien steenkooltrokke en watertenk, gevorm het, bo-oor die steenkool trokke beweeg nadat die kop van die trein op sy sy te lande gekom het. Niks anders as gebreekte hout en verwronge stukke metaal het oorgebly nie tesame met slegs die agterkant van 'n Ford motorkar wat op een van die gelaai trokke was.

Nie een van die passasiers in die voorste twee trokke is beseer nie, behalwe dat hulle aan skok gely het en 'n paar skrape opgedoen het. Die derde passasierswa was minder gelukkig want dié het neus eerste bo-op die wrakke van die ander trokke te lande gekom. Verpleegster van Rooyen is op slag dood. Sy was na bewering van Plettenbergbaai en 'n skamele 24 jaar oud. Gert van Rooyen, Verpleegster van Rooyen se neef twee keer verwyderd, het later getuig dat sy 'n verpleegster by die Valkenburg Hospitaal vir geestelike versteurdes was. Sy het haar familie gedurende Desember van die vorige jaar gesien en genoem dat sy 'n pasiënt moes vergesel na Pretoria waar hy in 'n inrigting opgeneem sou word. Op 1 Januarie het hulle 'n telegram van haar gekry waarin sy noem dat sy op 2 Januarie weer tuis te

wees. Ongelukkig was 'n veilige tuiskoms haar nie beskore nie en moes Gert haar besittings in Graaff-Reinet kom uitken – 'n pienk rok, 'n paar kledingstukkies en 'n sonsambreel. Haar moeder was te oud en kon nie Graaff-reinet toe reis nie. Verpleegster van Rooyen het baie lig blonde amper geel, hare gehad en blou oë.

Maar wat kon tot hierdie verskriklike ramp aanleiding gegee het?

Because I'm thinking in a broader way, I feel like I am able to make better decisions.

Takafumi Horie - Thinking - Decisions

Always think outside the box and embrace opportunities that appear, wherever they might be.

Lakshmi Mittal - Opportunities - Thinking

We would accomplish many more things if we did not think of them as impossible.

Vince Lombardi - Optimistic - Achievement - Thinking

Traditional thinking is all about "what is" Future thinking will also need to be about what can be.

Edward de Bono - Thinking - Ideas

