



FRANSIE PIENAAR MUSEUM

The Fransie Pienaar Museum is the custodian of the history of Prince Albert. Most of the antiques and artefacts on display were collected by Fransie Pienaar. Among others there are also exhibits about the Swartberg Pass, Gamkaskloof (The Hell), the Stone Ages and fossils. Tel 023 5411172.

Open: Weekly 8.30am - 1pm and 2pm - 4.30pm
Sat 9.30am - 12.30pm, Son 10.30am - 11.30am

Friends of the Fransie Pienaar Museum Annual General Meeting

Lydia Barrella

The AGM of the Friends of the Fransie Pienaar Museum was held at the museum on May 28, 2019. After the usual agenda of the AGM was concluded our chairperson of the control board, Mary Anne Botha introduced Prof. Sue Milton-Dean who spoke about the subject “**Global warming – will it affect life in Prince Albert**”.

Since 2016 extreme weather events have awoken people in many parts of the world to the reality of the ongoing change in climate, and particularly to the warming of the atmosphere and oceans. Apart from the melting of Arctic sea ice and glaciers, record heatwaves in Australia, Europe and

South Africa, there have been floods in India, Japan, Iran and southern Africa, a freak hail storm in Mexico that deposited over a meter of ice in mid-summer, massive wildfires in California and the southern Cape and droughts in Australia, Korea and the Karoo.

Tens of thousands of young people worldwide are demonstrating against the use of fossil fuels and the culture of consumerism that ranks wealth and possessions over sustainable use of natural resources, the conservation of the diversity of life and a secure future for humanity.

Global warming has already taken a toll on our village: In the past four years

we have seen major fires in the Prince Albert Valley and on the Swartberg, floods that destroyed the road and town water infrastructure in the Swartberg Pass, experienced record summer heat, and a drought that has already lasted over four years (Figure 1). The day and night temperature for every month of the year have exceeded the long-term norm since 2016 (Figure 2), nights with temperatures below freezing have decreased, and the sunburn risk is increasing.

These climate changes are having significant negative effects on the economy of our village and more widely in the Central Karoo. The agricultural sector

for Olive Showfarm
Swartrivier

Breakfast and Light Lunches

Shop

Factory tours

Olive tastings

Hours:
Tuesday to Friday 09:00 - 16:00
Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays 09:00 - 14:00

Contact:
023 54 11 917
073 12 01 243

has been hardest hit as grazing plants are leafless or dead, forcing livestock farmers to reduce livestock and buy in forage at great expense. Deciduous fruits such as apricots and grapes are failing because of water stress and because they are not losing their leaves early enough to reduce pests and rest before spring. Increased commodity and fuel prices together with heat and water shortages have reduced the popularity of our village for tourists. While a slump in property prices creates a potential buyers' market with potential for economic revival, some businesses have been forced to reduce their employees, exacerbating the already high unemployment rate in the Central Karoo.

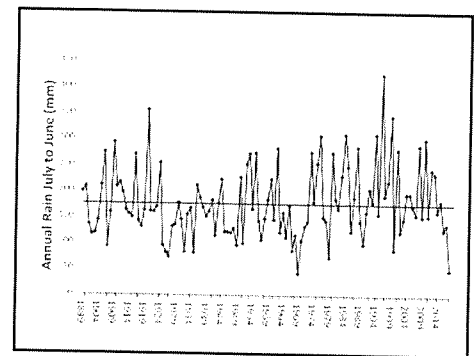
Prince Albert lies in a fertile valley *Kweek Vallej* fed by the crystal clear *Dorps River* that flows continually from the cloudy, and sometimes snowy, peaks of the Swartberg. This life-giving water flowing onto the plains has, over thousands of years, provided food, in the form of wildlife, wild plants, livestock and crops, to the various people that have settled in this beautiful area. Today this water source is the lifeblood not only of every inhabitant but must also serve agriculture, recreation, tourism and industry. The river with its water is also essential for the survival of

frogs, dragonflies, *soetdoring* and *karee* trees, and the birds and bees that pollinate flowers. For all these reasons, wise use of water is essential for sustaining our village.

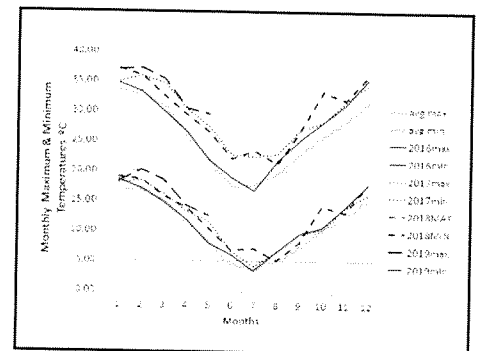
Would that we could make our village a model for the future and for other desert towns! If only we could work together to allocate water wisely to maintain natural river habitats and to use water as efficiently as possible for food production and hygiene. We could minimize use of fossil fuels such as petrol, diesel and gas if we captured sun energy via solar panels on every roof, used a public transport system in the village, and we built our houses to conserve warmth in winter and retain coolness in summer without air-conditions and heaters. Let's not sit back and wait to become a ghost town: let us start now to build a climate resilient village. ■

The South African Environmental Observation Network made recent temperature data from Tierberg available for use in this talk. For more information on SAEON and the long-term data collection sites see <http://www.saeon.ac.za/nodes>

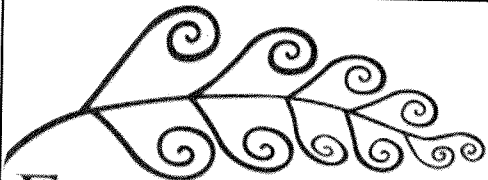
The readers of the Museum AGM article might also like to visit this website <https://www.worldweatheronline.com/prince-albert-weather-averages/western-cape/za.aspx>



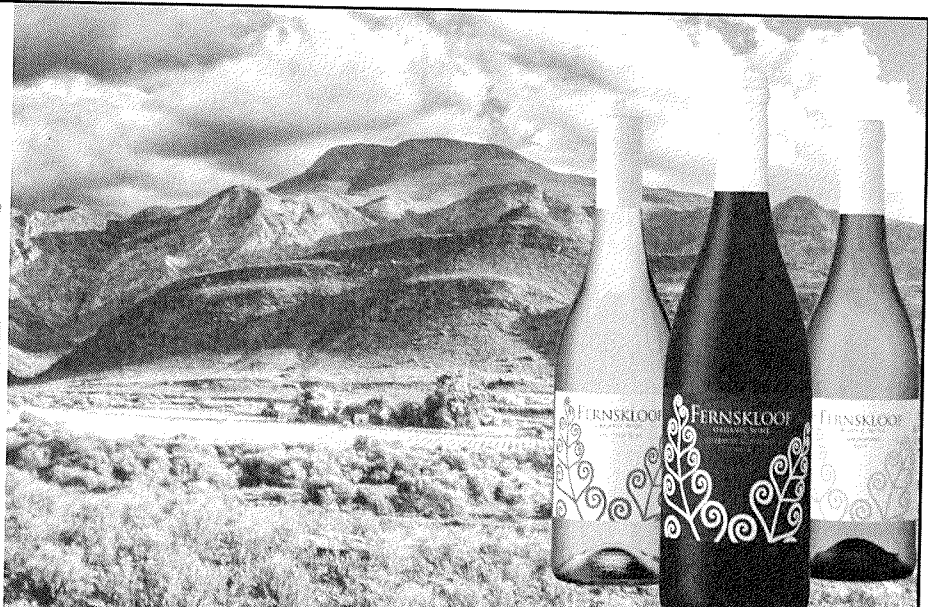
Total annual rainfall for Prince Albert from 1899 to 2019



Average maximum and minimum monthly temperatures for the years 2016 to 2019 compared to the 30-year averages measured at Tierberg, 30 km East of Prince Albert



FERNSKLOOF
— ORGANIC WINES —



Maandae – Saterdag: 10:00 – 16:00 Sondag: 10:00 – 14:00 per afspraak

023 5411 702

Wandelpad hardloop/staproetes: 7km / 10km / 16km

Geleë 16km buite Prince Albert op die R407, op pad na Klarstroom