

## Charming little lizards

Many Atlantic Beach residents love the articles on the local fauna. With keen observation one resident spotted the featured and very rare Cape dwarf chameleon in his garden. *Bradypodion pumilum* is native to the Western Cape where it's restricted to the Cape Town region.

In the past, most South African dwarf chameleons were considered to be a subspecies of the Cape species. However, *B pumilum* doesn't appear to have any particularly close living relatives. This little creature is a CITES-protected endangered species.

Known to grow more than 15 cm in length including the tail, male and female Cape dwarf chameleons reach similar adult sizes. They're ovoviviparous, but examination in controlled captivity has shown that there's a soft egg-like membrane around the young which is discarded at birth. The young resemble miniature versions of the adults with muted colours and typically are no more than 2 cm in length.

Adults vary quite significantly in colour variety, saturation and pattern, some appearing much more vibrant than others. The tail is prehensile, and the feet are well evolved to grasp twigs, with minute



claws on the end to improve grip. As with most chameleons, its telescopic tongue is twice the length of its body and can be shot out of its mouth using a special muscle in the jaw. This gives the chameleon the ability to catch insects some distance away.

Normally slow moving, chameleons have a characteristic shake which may let them look more like leaves to prey and predators. When provoked, they can speed up to several centimetres a second. When further provoked, they'll inflate themselves, hiss, change colour dramatically and bite. They don't have sharp teeth, so their bite rarely inflicts more than a slight pinch.

These little dwarfs are better admired

than handled, although taming is possible - provided gentle and consistent (almost daily) contact and trust are built up. This is typically achieved through careful and slow hand-based feeding of flies, small spiders, grasshoppers, etc. But, please take care: chameleons can easily succumb to stress. If they feel threatened, they'll darken themselves and hiss, flaring their brightly coloured interstitial skin in the gular region. They can't survive outside of their natural environment and should remain outdoors where they're able to regulate body temperature using sunlight.

Most chameleons live mainly in trees, bushes and on other plants. Eating primarily insects, they're only active by day.



## The final straw

Sadly, we have to address the issue of outstanding levy payments again. Fact is, defaulters are shooting themselves in the foot by desisting payment. Following a final warning, the biometric profiles of defaulters will now be suspended. In simple terms, this means a defaulter may only enter the estate via the main gate. He/she will have to show proof of ID for security to cross-reference ownership on the database. His/her garden refuse won't be collected and he or she won't be allowed at community events.

But the final humiliation is the worst: security will no longer phone to announce defaulters' visitors and allow them access. Instead, the visitor would have to phone the defaulter from his/her cell phone and the defaulter would then have to drive to the gate to collect his/her guest(s).

These measures were introduced in desperation by the ABHOA to collect outstanding fees from residents who simply ignore reasonable demands. Surely it's better to pay what you owe?

# Spotlight on Ben Stone-Francisco



## NURSERY & LANDSCAPE DESIGN MANAGER

**Born:** San Francisco, California

**Career:** Environmental science teacher, marine species husbandry, Heron's Head Park Wetland reserve manager, environmental justice

**Education:** University of Hawaii, San Francisco State University

**Personal best:** Purging my life of all material wealth and moving to Cape Town

### Professional best:

San Francisco community attaché of public, private and governmental agencies for land conservation and community development

### Most-liked about

**Atlantic Beach:** Our mission to co-exist with our natural surroundings

**Least-liked about Atlantic Beach:** Not enough crossings for our fauna

**Person with biggest influence on your life:** Martin Luther King Jr

**Favourite actors:** Nicolas Cage, Penelope Cruz

**Philosophy:** Life's a dance between monotony and miracles

**Biggest ever opportunity:** Living in Cape Town

**Biggest ever disappointment:** Not meeting my grandparents, Urbano and Alicia

**Hope:** To continue educating today's young people in the needs and skills of tomorrow



### Favourite reading:

Cultural & historical anthropology

**Favourite colour:** All shades of green

### Best TV

**programme:** *Carte Blanche*, *7de Laan*

### Favourite

**food/drink:** Seafood/white wine

**Best time of day:** Sunset while floating in the ocean

**Favourite music:** Indy rock, punk, jazz, funk

**Favourite holiday:** Jungle-lined beaches of Mexico's West Coast

**Favourite sport (self):** Surfing & all 'sideway' sports

**Favourite sport (spectator):** SA PSL

**Biggest extravagance:** Vegas

**Car:** Mercier bicycle

**Pets:** Boxer step-dogs Dominic (6), Abby (6 months)

**Dislikes:** Drama queens, sceptics

**Married:** Sarah (6 yrs)

**Hobbies:** Guitar, yoga, outdoor activities, community service

## Don't attach - detach

If we can master attachment, we'd have control of our feelings and emotions and be able to lead happier, more fulfilled lives. Publisher of *Complete Wellbeing* Manoj Khatri defines attachment as holding on to other people, places, or things to give your life meaning and direction. "When we're attached, we define ourselves, our purpose and happiness in terms of ideas, values, things, or people external to us - so much so we allow ourselves and our emotional states to be dictated by them."

He cites the root cause of all human misery as our tendency to become attached. Think how you feel about some of your most valued possessions, such as your car, jewellery, or mobile phone. Now, imagine any one of these possessions getting damaged beyond repair or lost. If you're attached to your possession, you'll feel upset about such an 'unfortunate' event. Yet, rationally speaking, if there's nothing you can do to reverse the happening, there's no point in losing your calm, or feeling sad.

We can be attached to our judgments, relationships, jobs, possessions, value systems, our past or political ideologies. Khatri says the only way out of attachments is to develop a conscious attitude of detachment. Detachment



doesn't imply indifference. "It means enjoying your life and all its gifts without demanding that they always remain in your life exactly as you want. When you replace attachment with detachment, nothing changes except your own attitude. You can continue to enjoy and appreciate everything without the

accompanying fear of losing it. When you're detached, you place your life in a healthy, rational perspective and acknowledge that there's

a need to retreat from those events and circumstances of life over which you have no control."

Dr Wayne Dyer defines detachment in relationships as "The ability and willingness to allow those that you care for to be what they choose for themselves, without any insistence that they satisfy you."

Khatri lists six steps to develop detachment: identify those relationships in which there's a dependency equation; seize control of your emotions from external sources such as people, places, or things; hand over situations which you can't

change to whatever higher power you believe in; don't blame others for the way you feel; reduce the impact of guilt and other irrational beliefs which inhibit your ability to develop detachment in your life; relinquish the need to correct, fix, or make better the persons, places and things in life over which you have no control.

# Renovations made pleasant

With the economic crunch biting, homeowners are opting for home improvements instead of selling and buying a larger house. Renovating can be costly and inconvenient, but also can increase the value and enjoyment of your home. Whether you increase the value of the home may not be an important factor in how much you decide to spend. However, it's easy to get carried away with the excitement of doing up a home and over-capitalise by spending money that can never be recouped if you do end up having to sell. Then you may regret the R400 000 kitchen in your R3-million house - should unexpected life changes occur.

Jobs that focus on cosmetic elements such as new paint and fixtures are the most cost-effective remodels. If you only have enough money to update one room, choose the kitchen or bathroom. Although these rooms are more expensive to update than other rooms, this is the area where you'll see the most return from your money when you do sell.

The most important part to planning a remodel is the job sequence. After you've researched and decided which type of jobs will make the most use of your money, plan what jobs should be done immediately. If you're not sure, the rule of thumb is to work biggest to smallest.

Choosing the right people to do the job makes the difference between a positive experience or a nightmare. When selecting a builder follow a careful selection process. Make a shortlist from recommendations, or people you've found in the Yellow Pages. Decide whether you want someone on a full contract, labour only or managed labour contract. Obtain a number of quotes, revising your budget once you have prices. Choose the best tender, which isn't necessarily the cheapest, but will take into account qualifications, Building Council membership, guarantees offered and key attributes such as skill, integrity, honesty, sense of responsibility, knowledge of the housing industry, a personality that meshes with yours,

patience and an understanding of your goals and budget. Sign a contract and check what insurance the builder has.

painting (although no plan is required in this instance), swimming pool installations, add-ons and structural changes.



When submitting plans for alterations/additions to the ABHOA, a scrutiny deposit of R250 is payable. On collection of the approved plans, the balance is payable. This fee is charged at R385 an hour by the review architect and will vary according to the project scope and the amount of amendments required before the drawings can be approved, etc.

As soon as building is about to start, the builder should sign the ABHOA Code of Conduct and pay a refundable R5 000 deposit. A further building levy of R500 per month is payable, of which the first three months' fee of R1 500 is payable in advance. All main contractors have to attend the ABHOA's monthly contractors' meeting on the last Monday of the month, where the rules are rehashed among other things. These meetings take place at the Clubhouse's Spinnaker room. Fines of R300 are issued to non-attendees.

On completion of the work, request an ABHOA inspection. If all's in order, a clearance certificate will be issued. With this document, the homeowner and/or contractor can obtain a refund of the deposit, minus any fines.

Enjoy the renovation experience.

That done, we provide an overview of the steps to follow for home alterations and additions on Atlantic Beach Golf Estate.

Among the projects that qualify as alterations and additions are external



**STOP** means just that

# Laugh your head off



Our winter-warmer event on Saturday 11 July is a theatre bus trip to On Broadway in the CBD. Seats are limited, so book now. The cost of R225 includes snacks and wine on the bus going there, a three-course meal, laughing your heads off at the show *3 Tons of Fun* and rounding off the night with port and chocolates on the return trip. Book with Yolanda on 021 5530590 or admin@abhoa.co.za.

# Rev up gardens



Knock your gardens into shape for the estate's annual garden competition beginning-September. Judging will take place from 1 – 4 September with the prizegiving on 5 September. This will coincide with ABHOA's Creepy Crawly Spiders & Scorpions Experience.

For a greater variety of flora indigenous to the estate's biosphere, check out the new plant list on the ABHOA website. Almost 60% of these varieties are available at the nursery and the aim is to stock 100% by spring this year. All the plants have a low water requirement.



# Eggstacy

Children rocked up in their droves to find eggs at our annual Easter Egg Hunt in April.

# Lost it?

For any lost property, please contact the control room. All items found on the estate are logged and kept for three months. Thereafter, if not claimed, it will be donated to charity.

# The cost of vandalism

Now we have to clear up the aftermath of the intolerable vandalism on the estate. All those expensive imported bollard lights that have been damaged by mindless vandals (who happen to be estate residents) will be removed within the next few weeks and replaced at a significant cost. The ABHOA is still deliberating obtaining cheaper lights, because the original lights are no longer available. This is truly a case of an unnecessary expense.



# Bumping 'n blitzing

Traffic offenders, brace yourself: a further 11 speed bumps are now in place on the estate and regular fining blitzes will be the order of the day. Repeated requests to adhere to traffic rules have fallen on deaf ears, so bumps and blitzes seem to be the answer. Despite complaints to the contrary, we confirm that low sports cars, motorcycles and bicycles are able to clear the humps with ease – if they're negotiated slowly, which is the whole idea.

Finally, please remember that children, animals, joggers, cyclists, wheelchair riders and all other types of pedestrians have right of way on estate roads. Estate roads aren't council roads - everyone and everything have the right of way before the motorist.

