



## PHASA RAISES CLOSE ON R11-MILLION FOR TRAINING AND CONSERVATION

The Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa (PHASA) has raised just under R11 million for wildlife NGOs since the establishment of its Conservation and Empowerment Fund in 2003.

The biggest beneficiary of the fund has been the Southern African Wildlife College which, over the years, has received over R8.5 million from PHASA's fund to train a total of 1 206 people from 12 conservation organisations in five countries within the SADC region. These students, most of whom are historically disadvantaged individuals, have been trained across various conservation programmes at the College.

The largest money-raiser for the fund is PHASA's Annual Wildlife Heritage Gala Event, which this year raised a record R2.4 million in an auction lasting little more than an hour. Among the items auctioned were artworks, jewellery and a variety of hunting and photographic safari packages, donated by various conservation organisations, hunting outfitters and businesses.

"Proper training in conservation and resource economics are areas we identified as being most in need of funding and we are extremely proud of our efforts so far, believing this to be another testament to the enduring contribution of hunting towards conservation and the wildlife economy," said newly elected president of the fund, Peter Ruddle.



Gys van der Merwe (second on left) from the North West Parks and Tourism Board and Theresa Sowry (second on right) CEO of the South African Wildlife College receive a cheque of nearly R2.4 million from Adri Kitshoff (far left), PHASA Chief Executive and Hermann Meyerdricks (far right), PHASA president at PHASA's Annual Wildlife Heritage Event.

Additionally, the fund has given more than R1.5 million to North West Parks and Tourism for its training programmes and has sponsored bursaries for previously disadvantaged individuals looking to pursue a career in wildlife management to the value of R50 000. It has also contributed more than R220 000 towards general social upliftment programmes including

Toys for Africa, Zululand Crèche and the MagqubuNtombela Memorial Foundation.

PHASA is also actively involved in a number of anti-poaching initiatives and has donated close to R1-million to the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA), the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), SAN Parks, and the Zululand Rhino Reserve.

## THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILDLIFE COLLEGE TRUST'S DONORS CONTINUE TO PLEDGE THEIR SUPPORT

With the generous support of the Southern African Wildlife College Trust's (SAWCT) donors, three deserving students who completed the Higher Certificate in Nature Conservation in 2013 were selected to continue their studies at the Southern African Wildlife College in 2014. After completing the Advanced Certificate Programme, these students will go on to manage some of the world's most biologically diverse areas. In implementing the skills learnt, they collaborate with a broad array of stakeholders including government agencies, conservation groups and communities to achieve long lasting conservation results that help address economic and ecological needs. In addition, SAWCT has also sponsored two students enrolled for the Higher Certificate in Nature Conservation: Implementation and Leadership.

Over the past 14 years, SAWCT has awarded 33 Higher Education and Training scholarships and 17 bursaries to some of the College's top students. These scholarships and bursaries are particularly relevant given that conservation education and training is not well funded in southern Africa. The College does not receive a government subsidy and is reliant on external funding, which means that the financial support of donors plays a critical role in the on-going success of the College and allows it continue with its crucial task of training the custodians of our wildlife heritage.

To further support the work of the College, the SAWCT trustees approved the appointment of part-time fundraiser, Heather van Wyk, to help raise the profile of the Trust and to build the

endowment portfolio. Heather is based in Cape Town and is making good progress in growing the SAWCT donor base. SAWCT looks forward to her consolidating relationships with its valued donors so that the Trust can continue to build capacity for conservation in Africa.

*It must please be noted that the Trust has officially changed its acronym from SACET to SAWCT, which reflects the updated and registered name of the Trust. The Southern African Wildlife College is the only beneficiary of the Trust, which was set up as an individual capital trust fund by WWF-SA in May 2000. The main aim of the Trust is to provide funding for training in nature conservation management. Donors are able to invest with minimal overheads knowing that the fund is professionally managed.*

## DEATH OF A CONSERVATION GIANT DR. ANTHONY HALL-MARTIN



It is with profound sadness that African Parks' relayed the news that Dr Anthony Hall-Martin, co-founder and conservation director of African Parks, passed away on Wednesday 21 May after a prolonged struggle with cancer. He was 68 years old and is survived by his wife Catherina and daughters Vega and Cate.

Peter Fearnhead Chief Executive Officer - African Parks Network gives some insight into his life's work and the legacy he leaves:

"Anthony had a distinguished conservation career of nearly 50 years and his loss will resonate throughout the continent. During his lifetime he tirelessly championed the cause of wildlife conservation, raised millions of dollars for its benefit, and was responsible for the establishment, expansion or management of dozens of protected areas. He was particularly renowned as a world authority on the African elephant and black rhinoceros and was the author of more than ten books and 80 published scientific papers.

During his lengthy tenure at South African National Parks, he was directly responsible for the establishment of six new national parks including Table Mountain National Park, Agulhas National Park, Namaqua National Park and Mapungubwe National Park. He was also responsible for the significant expansion of several national parks adding an additional 400,000 hectares to amongst others, Addo National Park, Augrabies National Park, Mountain Zebra National Park, Karoo National Park and Marakele National Park. Anthony also had the foresight to de-proclaim the compromised Vaalbos National Park which was then replaced with the bio-diversity rich Mokoala National Park. He was a pioneer in the establishment of transfrontier conservation areas and was responsible for the conclusion of the agreement between Botswana and South Africa that gave rise to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.

During his career he was responsible for the introduction of elephant and rhino to national parks and wildlife reserves across Africa, contributing greatly to the conservation of these species. Today, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania have populations of black rhino as a direct result of his interventions.

As co-founder of African Parks in 2000, Anthony had the foresight to realise that a pragmatic new model was required to address the looming conservation crisis in many parts of Africa. As the Conservation and Development Director at African Parks, he championed the organisation's entry into Malawi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Zambia, and negotiated with dozens of African Governments to advance the conservation of protected areas across the continent. One of his notable success stories was the transformation of Majete Wildlife Reserve in Malawi from a totally depleted park to a thriving conservation success involving an initial restocking of over 2,500 animals including elephant, black rhinoceros, buffalo, sable antelope, zebra, lion and leopard.

At the time of his death, Anthony was a board member of Majete Wildlife Reserve in Malawi, Liuwa Plain National Park in Zambia and Akagera National Park in Rwanda. He continued to work tirelessly to secure more protected areas across Africa until literally days before his death.

He was also a founder of the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group and co-founder of the Rhino and Elephant Foundation. As a trusted advisor to many conservation organisations, including the IUCN, WWF, Endangered Wildlife Trust and Peace Parks Foundation, he received a number of awards for his contribution to conservation, including the British Council for Zoology Award, the Bruno H Schubert Prize in Germany, the Senior Captain Scott Medal from the South African Academy of Science, and the National Geographic Society Award.

As tributes pour in from the conservation world, those who knew Anthony have described him as a conservation giant whose impact was felt throughout the African continent. At African Parks, he was a mentor, friend and inspiration to his many colleagues who valued and benefitted from his wisdom, wit and guidance. He has left a significant conservation legacy for the world and he will be sorely missed by all who knew, respected and loved him."

## Launched: R32-million project on natural resource governance, economics and livelihoods

A key concern facing large protected areas and buffer zones in southern Africa is that they are locked in a vicious cycle of rural poverty and environmental degradation. Weak knowledge about the practicalities of micro-governance, devolution and economic policy, weak stakeholder learning systems and a major shortage of professionals with economic, governance and stakeholder skills are central to these challenges. A 32-million rand project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) under the new NORHED programme (Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development) has now provided a critical opportunity for research and capacity building in this arena. In February 2014, an inception workshop was held at Mukambi Lodge along the banks of the Kafue River, Kafue National Park in Zambia. Here, project partners, stakeholders and potential PhD students met to prioritize research topics, develop Masters modules and to conceptualize the operational plan for this 5-year programme.

The SAWC is one of four partners. The others include the Copperbelt University in Zambia (main contractual partner with Norad), The University of Stellenbosch (SU) and the Department of International Environment and Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). Dr Alan Gardiner, Mrs Sandy du Plessis (previously Ms Sandy Slater-Jones) and Rogers Lubilo are the participating researchers from SAWC. The College will receive funding for capacity development (a research camp & equipment) and for 4 PhD candidates over the next 5 years. Two PhD candidates so far Identified are Sandy du Plessis and Sakhile Nsukwini. These students will receive training through the Stellenbosch TsamaHub (Transdisciplinarity in Sustainability – Analysis, Modelling and Assessment), which focuses on training for sustainable solutions to Africa's problems in complex social-ecological systems.

As part of the embraced philosophy of transdisciplinarity and co-learning, a range of key stakeholders were present at the inception meeting – these included representatives from Game Rangers International, Higher Education Africa (CHET), Ministry of Agriculture, Mozambique (Direcção Nacional de Terras e Florestas), Panthera, SabiSands, SanParks, The Nature Conservancy Council (TNC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Wits Rural, Zambian Forest College, Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA), as well as representatives from the communities surrounding Kafue and from the private sector. During the course of the week, delegates had an opportunity to engage with the challenges facing Kafue Park managers, tourism operators, and community members living in and around the buffer zone around the park. This practical context helped the group to jointly frame and prioritize research and teaching plans. We thank Karen Esler for her major input into this article.

For more information on the project, its funder and partner institutions see:

<http://www.umb.no/noragric/article/norhed-improving-the-governance-and-economics-of-protected-areas>

NORHED: <http://www.norad.no/en/support/norhed>

NMBU: <http://www.umb.no/noragric/>

CBU: <http://www.cbu.edu.zm/index.php>

SU: <http://www.tsama.org.za/SAWC>

# THE OMELETTE CHALLENGE

**“In order to make an omelette - eggs have to be broken, and we intend to try and do so with open-sighted big bore rifles!”**

That was the open invitation to all and sundry (well at least those who are competent with a rifle) by Dr. Kevin Robertson to attend the inaugural omelette challenge - a shooting competition with a difference to be held on 17 May 2014 at the SAWC shooting range. The rules were simple:

- A domestic chicken egg will be hung by a thread from a frame.
- The initial shooting distance will be 50m.
- Two sighting-in shots will be allowed at that distance, off shooting sticks at a paper target – so there are no excuses!
- Entrance fee is R20 per contestant – with the overall winner taking all.
- Shooting order for contestants will be in accordance to age – youngest shooting first through to oldest.
- Shots at the egg can only be taken from the standing, freehand position.
- Initially one shot per contestant at 50m.
- Should the egg remain intact after all contestants have fired a shot at it, the shooting distance will be decreased to 40m and so on until the egg is eventually broken.
- Should more than one contestant hit an egg at 50m, a shoot-off at 40m will take place until a winner emerges.
- Only open-sighted rifles in calibers .375 H&H or larger may be used.
- Rifles with barrels longer than 25.5 inches will due to an unfair advantage, incur a 5m distance penalty! (Only kidding Piet!)
- Double rifles are welcome – if deemed accurate enough! (Only kidding Rich!)
- Foreign contestants will be required to pay in Euro’s or USD’s! ((Only kidding Mats & PO!)
- Looking forward to seeing you all Saturday afternoon – bring your rifles but leave your excuses at home!



(Left to right) Dr. Kevin Robertson, Mats Bergholm, PO Stenmark, Pieter Nel, Richard Sowry and Gawie Lindeque

The idea came about when we thought of a suitable way to welcome a very special rifle and its builder to the College. Let me explain.

Well over a year ago we received news from our dear friend Mats Bergholm from Sweden that his good friend and gunsmith PO Stenmark intended to build and donate a .458 rifle to the College. To top it all, Mats also bought a .375 H&H rifle and also donated it to the College. A very generous gesture from two wonderful gentlemen, thank you very much. The rifle was built and tested with 100 rounds of ammunition kindly donated by Norma Ammunition of Sweden. Aimpoint also donated one of their H-1 Micro red dot sights to complement the rifle. A huge thank you to all, it is a great comfort to know we have such good friends in Sweden.

The paperwork was done and the import permits applied for. After many months and a whole lot of grey hairs later, the slow wheels of government turned just in time and the import permits were granted on 12 May and Mats and PO arrived with the rifles in SA on 16 May - talk about a close shave.

It was with great anticipation that we all welcomed Mats and PO at the College on Saturday 17 May 2014. After a brief lunch and initial inspection accompanied by much “oohing” and “aahhing” it was time to head down to the shooting range for the shoot. At the range, the first order of business was to check the zero of the new rifles, afterwards we all took a shot with the rifle at a buffalo target to get the feel of the new rifle. Everyone was in agreement that the .458 was a well balanced and naturally pointing rifle, a tribute to the expertise and brilliant craftsmanship of her builder. By this time we were joined by Mr. Richard Sowry, the local section ranger and it was time to get to the main event.

Entrance fees were paid and the first egg was hung. Myself as the youngest was called upon to break the ice and after the first round at 50m the egg was still intact. Moving down to 40m the egg only survived until it was Richard’s turn who shattered the egg with the right barrel of his exquisite Heym double rifle in cal .450 Nitro, dispelling the popular myth that double rifles are not as accurate as single barrel rifles. Just for fun and reasoning that you cannot make a decent omelette with only one egg, we continued the challenge moving down to 35m. The second egg survived the entire round making all of us think that Richard’s shot at 40m was a fluke. We moved down to 30 meters and both Richard and Kevin managed to break an egg each and we finally ran out of eggs at 25m.

Then it was time to have some more fun. Kevin very generously gave each of us a shot of two with his .505 Gibbs. Generous is probably an understatement, to quote Kevin: “As any good Scotsman would say every time his rifle goes bang, its equivalent in price to a bottle of good Scotch.”

After that it was time to engage the simulated buffalo charge. After the shoot it was time for a brief game drive and a couple of cold beers. We shortly found a big herd of buffalo and it was agreed that there is no better way to spend a Saturday afternoon than to shoot big bore rifles and then watch a herd of buffalo with a cold beer in hand.

That night at the braai in the bush pub it was decided the day was so much fun that we must do it again. In fact it was so much fun that we decided that it should become a regular event. Kevin’s wife Catherine was dully commissioned to design and make a floating trophy for the future winner of the omelette challenge.

By Gawie Lindeque

Burman Dunston almost dropping Dr. Robertson’s beloved .550 Gibbs. Phew!

Pieter Nel getting to grips with a simulated buffalo charge.

(Left to right) PO Stenmark, Dr. Kevin Robertson and Mats Bergholm with the donated .458 rifle.



## OUR STUDENTS

I recently lay luxuriating in a hot bath when a familiar sound came to me over the bush. It was not the roaring of lions or the flute-like call of the magpie shrikes, but the singing of a field ranger squad as they went about their early morning training exercises. I felt a twinge of guilt as I lay there...

Our students are what make the Southern African Wildlife College. It is easy to get caught up in the admin and logistics it takes to prepare lessons, to train and to mark papers, but sometimes we miss what they give (and give up) to be here. Our students usually spend long periods away from their families. They wake early, go to bed late, study hard and many must still do periods of exercise and physical training between. There is a level of dedication that we sometimes take for granted. In the last few months I have trained and worked with a wide range of different student groups, and have recognised these attributes in them all.

In my youth, I was conscripted to the army and had no desire (and no choice) to be there. When I had to run, it was out of fear of the corporal that I ran and not because of my burning desire to fight an "enemy" I held no grudge against whatsoever. While assisting with a selection program for field rangers recently I saw guts and determination that I admire. I watched these young people running along the Morgonzon cutline without any reason to be there - other than their passion and desire to work in conservation. We owe our gratitude to each one of them for taking up this tough physical and mental challenge to place their lives on the line to protect our wild places.

Like students anywhere, ours also lapse and have personal problems and issues from time to time. Whenever I find myself becoming frustrated with a class for inattention, or nodding off during lessons, I remind myself what we are all here for. I think too what the consequences would be for our region without this willing and dedicated youth. Doing that, I am soon able to see past my challenges and focus on the biggest asset the College has – our students. THANK YOU

By Malcolm Douglas



## AFRTS Division



The African Field Ranger Training Services Division is proud to have started training in the Field Ranger base and the results will be coming in. This training condition brings the Field Ranger to the workplace before the deployment takes place. This is training as applicable as it gets! Well done to Tiaan Kleynhans, James Lourens and Hans Coetzee who are running this course.

### Skills Programmes

A selection for the Train the Trainer course has taken place and seventy two applicants started. Twenty possible Field Rangers and Trainers were selected. This process has proven itself over the past seventeen years and should yield good results again. The course is being presented by Tiaan Kleynhans supported by Hans Coetzee. The course will serve as a further selection process to ensure that African Field Ranger Training Services Division gets the best possible Trainers for future possibilities. The training is being funded by the MusartE Foundation and their contribution is commended and much appreciated.

An advanced Field Ranger course was completed in Swaziland for the Swaziland National Trust Commission as funded by the Tusk Trust. The Trainer for the course was Clive van Rooyen and the success of the course speaks for itself. Two poachers arrested during training must indicate more effective staff on the ground!! Well done to Clive and Jaco van Biljon, you have made the African Field Ranger Training Services Division proud! Clive will now move on to a permanent post with a private organization as the Anti-Poaching Manager. The Division is proud of his appointment and glad to have been part of his developmental process.

By Ruben de Kock

# COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

## Environmental Education Bridging Course

Twenty five youth from across the country recently arrived at the College to participate in the six month Introduction to Conservation and Environmental Education Bridging Programme. The course is aimed at school leavers who are interested in a career in environmental education and/or nature conservation. It focuses on exposing the learner to theory and practical application of environmental education and also the life of a field ranger in a conservation area. The learners have already done first aid, and snake handling. The latter challenged some of the learner's preconceptions about reptiles and so their fear of snakes with each of them getting an opportunity to handle an African rock python! Further on they will be doing field leadership, environmental education and presentations to the Eco-schools in the community and finally unarmed field ranger training. After completion of the contact sessions at the College, the learners will be deployed on Limpopo state-owned nature reserves for experiential learning. A big thank you to the Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust (Managed by Nedbank Private Wealth), Friends of African Wildlife, Rand Merchant Bank and the Timbavati Foundation for making this course and the student's studies possible.

## Youth Environmental Services

At total of 101 Youth from Thaba Chweu and Bushbuckridge trained in Waste Management, Recycling, and Environmental Awareness under the Youth Environmental Services project funded by the Department of Environmental Affairs. Since deployment earlier in the year to their local municipalities, learners have assisted their host institutions in carrying our core functions as well as initiating recycling initiatives, community clean up campaigns and starting food gardens at their primary schools. The learners have been very active in terms of raising community awareness around environmental issues and identifying and cleaning up illegal dumping sites.

By Sboniso Phakathi



# Gawie's Field News

There is a popular saying that it never rains but it pours. I was forcefully made aware of this a few weeks ago, one peaceful Sunday afternoon. An ex colleague came for a quick cup of tea and when she left our little Pincher Bonny took the gap and bolted out the front door to have run around the garden. I tried in vain to get her back inside and decided to let her be knowing she would come back shortly. When she did however a few minutes later all was not well. She came hobbling through the door on three legs, her right back leg was as straight as a fence post but she kept it off the ground. For an instant I feared a dislocated hip, but almost immediately banished the thought. My next thought was snake bite. There was complete silence as she hobbled around the couch and went to lie down on her favourite blanket and appeared to breathe her last. With a worried look my wife asked if she was bitten by a snake. I told her it appeared so. Softly she asked me if Bonny was dying. I looked up and saw a tear in her eye and I forced myself not to lie. At that moment I really thought she was. With a sob she ran to the phone and called our neighbour, Malcolm, the local snake expert and asked if he could come as quickly as possible, putting down the phone without an explanation. I don't know what went through his mind at that moment but he made the journey from his house in the same time it took me to pick Bonny up and carry her to the kitchen. We found a single puncture wound in her thigh and although she seemed in a lot of pain we couldn't find anything wrong. We deduced that she was probably chasing something and ran into a pile of cut down Sickie Bush and one of the thorns had penetrated deeply into the muscle. From personal experience I can vouch how painful and debilitating that can be. Well I gave Bonny an Aspirin for pain and made her as comfortable as possible.

Just as the "excitement" was over, we were sitting outside having a cup of coffee to let the nerves calm down when a couple of Bushbabies started to constantly call in the big tree above our heads. This

was driving our Spaniel crazy. My initial thought was that they were merely calling for the dog so I paid little attention. My wife on the other hand wasn't convinced and I finally decided to have a look. After carefully watching the Bushbabies for a while I noticed that they were very interested in the courtyard behind us. I took out my torch and found a massive Puff Adder slowly making its way across the courtyard straight for my daughter's sand pit. Action stations again! Luckily my daughter was in the kitchen at that time and totally unaware of the snake, but the Spaniel was hell bent on getting rid of this intruder in her territory. With a great deal of effort and shouting I finally managed to separate dog and snake and got the dog inside the house without being bitten. I fetched my snake tongs and safely placed the reptile in a bucket for later release. An hour later I was called to come and catch another Puff Adder blocking the passage close to the workshop. That brought the total number of Puff Adders caught on campus for that week to seven.

Back to Bonny. On Monday morning she was still alive but her leg was swollen badly and she was in a lot of pain. To cut a long story short that involved a visit from our other neighbour a retired vet, a group of student vets from Hluvukani animal clinic and a trip to Hoedspruit, it was finally confirmed that she was indeed bitten by a Puff Adder, the second dog on campus in the last while to suffer the same fate. Luckily both dogs survived the ordeal with little or no serious after effects.

Finally some confirmation that I am not totally losing the plot, came a couple of days ago in the form of a question. Malcolm Douglas and I were out on short walk with a group of students from the Wildlife Film Academy when he asked if I had also noticed a marked increase in zebra and wildebeest numbers these last few weeks. Regular readers to this newsletter will remember that I remark on this phenomenon every year around May, and this year

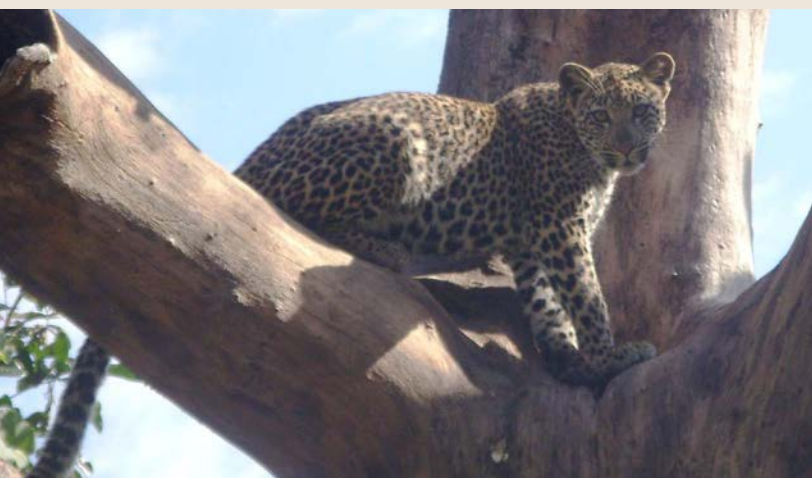
Malcolm confirmed it. Maybe this is something a clever scientist looking for a potential study might be interested in. My theory is that the zebra and wildebeest are spending the rainy season on the Basalt plains around Satara east of the College. When the seasonal pans on the plains dry up, a large number of them make their way west in search of water and return again when the rainy season opens. Anyone that has noticed similar events let me know - maybe we are onto something.

Even though we received rather good late summer rains, the bush has lost its lush green summer coat surprisingly fast. Already the smoke from the usual winter bush fires are turning sunsets into something spectacular. Most of these fires form part of the surrounding reserve's annual management burning program and play an important role in keeping the Savannah biome in good shape.

A group of giraffe have taken up residence lately and can be seen regularly slaking their thirst at the pan close to the workshop. We have also noticed a small group of elephant bulls, one old bull in the company of a few askaris having fun bathing and drinking at the borrow pit. The lions are reminding us of their presence almost nightly although sightings have been few and far between.

We spent two days in the Kruger Park with a group of students from the Wildlife Film Academy and managed on both days to tick off the big 5. Two sightings stand out as memorable. The first was of two leopard cubs playing in a tree along the Timbavati River and the other of a breeding herd of elephant having a drink at a waterhole close to Satara.

The last few months have been rather slow on the field activities side but that will change soon. The PH course will start in July and we also have two Field Ranger bush phases coming up. Hopefully we will have a little more to report on next time.



## With Compliments

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