

Editorial

WHY THE SKY IS BLUE

Late autumn means the promise of cloudless blue skies, some of the time at least. What makes the sky this colour?

For scientists, the answer is relatively straightforward: Rayleigh scattering. When white light from the sun reaches the Earth, it hits the gas molecules that make up the atmosphere. These molecules – mainly nitrogen and oxygen – are smaller than the wavelengths of light in the visible spectrum, and so scatter the light. White light is made up of different wavelengths, which, since Isaac Newton's experiments with prisms in the 17th century, we think of as a spectrum of seven different colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Light at the violet end of the spectrum travels in shorter, tighter waves, which are affected more by the molecules in the atmosphere than the longer, lower-frequency waves at the red end. This phenomenon is named after Lord Rayleigh, the British physicist who discovered it in the 19th century. The sky appears blue because shorter wavelengths are scattered more by the atmosphere than longer wavelengths; so the scattered sunlight that reaches our eyes when looking at the sky (rather than at the sun itself) is predominantly blue.

But there is a catch: not everyone would agree that the sky is blue. In 1858 William Gladstone, better known for being the Prime Minister of Britain four times during the 19th century, published a treatise on Homer. He noted, with astonishment, that the Greek poet did not once use the word blue. He used colour words rather oddly – he described the sea as “wine-dark”, iron as violet and honey as green. Further research showed that the Koran, the original Hebrew Bible, the Icelandic sagas and the Vedic hymns, written in India between 1500 BC and 1000 BC, also lack references to this hue, even when talking about the heavens. There are still many languages today that do not have a word that precisely correlates to the English word for the slice of the spectrum between green and purple. Russians might call the sky either *goluboe* (light blue) or *sinee* (darker blue); in Japan 青 (*ao*) encompasses the colour of the sky but also apples and grass; the Namibian Himba tribe would describe the sky as *zoozou*, which roughly translates as “dark” and includes shades of red, green and purple as well as blue.

This is more than a pedantic issue of translation: evidence suggests that language has a huge impact on how people interpret the world. Incredible as it may seem, having a distinct word for a colour reinforces and amplifies the perception of it as distinct from other shades. Without the word you don't perceive it as readily. To prove this, scientists showed groups of coloured tiles to the Himba, who found it difficult to pick out one blue tile from a group of 11 green ones (although they found it far easier than English-speakers to spot one yellow-green tile hiding amongst some more pine-hued ones). So although it is true that to English speakers the sky is blue, it is arguably only blue because they say it is.

From The Economist

WYNPRESS

The Rotary Club of

Wynberg



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May Rotary Theme
Youth Service Month

Wynberg Rotary meet every Thursday,
6 for 6.30pm,
Palm House, Wynberg.

For more information about our club, like us
on Facebook or visit our website:

Wynbergrotary.org.za



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

Minutes

17th May 2018

Compiled by Keela van Niekerk

Attendance

18 members present

Visitors

Stacy Edwards

From the President's Chair

Pres. Rob welcomed all present.

*We had a good meeting at Rotary am Kap last week

*Induction season is upon us. Hout Bay Rotary has already had their induction. Sea Point Rotary is on 13 June.

*Steenberg Rotaract Induction was held last week Friday, the club has been able to revive itself with 15 new members. Chadwin is the new President.

*Wynberg Rotaract won best Rotaract project at the District Conference

*Next week (24th): Biffy will provide feedback on conference and her travels.

*Soup evening, 31 May, at Monique's house

Fellowship

May's birthdays: Keela on 21; Stephanie on 22; Lindsay on 23

Slots

Justin: has flyers for the Quiz Night. Please contact him if you need any to distribute, or if you have any prizes.

Friday 25 May: Rotaract celebration at the Rotaract hall at 19.00. R50pp.

Friday 1 June: Melkbos Trivia Night (details distributed last week).

Biffy: Friday 25 May, 10.00: Tree planting at Fairmont High School. Please bring a bag of compost, gardening gloves, spades and drinking water.

Induction: Invitation sent out (also attached). Kindly pay soon by EFT.

Provide Keela with any raffle prizes by 31 May (Soup evening).

Tendai received a good job offer from Webber Wentzel and will be starting in June

Guest Speaker

Our newest member Tendai Bonga gave us insight into his career and family life.

Tendai studied at Wits for 5 years before returning to Zimbabwe. Once back, he worked for the Attorney General of Harare and joined the Rotary Club of Hunyani.

During that time he received a job offer from Cullinan and Associates, where he has worked for the last four and a half years doing environmental law. Tendai aspires to be an advocate one day.

He is married with a two year old son. He and his wife's relationship can be compared to Romeo and Juliet as they came from two opposing Zimbabwean tribes!

'Tendai' means to be grateful. Tendai was given this name after his Grandparents telling his Mom to stop being sad for not having a girl. Tendai's parents, older brother and sister all live in the U.K. and are all in the medical field.

We are pleased to have Tendai in the club and he will be assisting PE Biffy with Public Relations next year.

Barry introduced and thanked our speaker.

President's Sweetie Pie Swindle

Awarded to Tendai for his talk.

Keela had the chance, but was unsuccessful.

Duty Roster	May		June	
	24	31 (SOCIAL)	7 (INDUCTION)	14
Sergeant	Todd		Schreiber	Cleveland
Wynpress Editorial	Barnard		Bredenkamp	Bird
Wynpress Minutes	Maunder		Howard	Van Niekerk
Door Duty	Howard		Gowdy + Thomas	Schreiber
Grace	Schonegevel R		Klotz-Gleave	Todd
Loyal Toast	Danckwerts		Overbosch	Dietrich
International Toast	Schreiber		Bonga	Smith
Speaker Intro and Thanks	Dietrich		N/A	Howard
Entertainment for the month	Barnard, Bayes, Danckwerts, Gowdy, Thomas		Schonegevel R, Howard, Maunder, Overbosch, Bonga	

Dates To Diarise

24 May	Report back on District Conference – Biffy
26 May	Tree planting day at Fairmount High School: 10.00
31 May	Soup and sherry evening at Monique’s home
7 June	Biffy’s Induction as President. 19.00 at Westlake Golf Club
14 June	My job talk – Stephanie Thomas
16-23 June	Club visit to Rotary Club of Karmøy, Norway

“Never attempt to teach a pig to sing; it wastes your time and annoys the pig.”

- Robert A. Heinlein

Tailpiece

Imagine the conversation a God might have had with St. Francis on the subject of lawns:

God: Hey St. Francis, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on Earth? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistle and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect "no maintenance" garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colours by now. But all I see are these green rectangles.

St. Francis: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

God: Grass? But it's so boring. It's not colourful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It's temperamental with temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

St. Francis: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

God: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

St. Francis: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it... sometimes twice a week.

God: They cut it? Do they then bail it like hay?

St. Francis: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

God: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

St. Francis: No Sir. Just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

God: Now let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

St. Francis: Yes, Sir.

God: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

St. Francis: You are not going to believe this Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

God: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves form compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

St. Francis: You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

God: No! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter and to keep the soil moist and loose?

St. Francis: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

God: And where do they get this mulch?

St. Francis: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

God: Enough. I don't want to think about this anymore. Sister Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

Sister Catherine: "Dumb and Dumber", Lord. It's a real stupid movie about.....

God: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.