

# Cops praised for drop in school vandalism

## Cost of repairing damage slashed during Cup despite longer holidays – education department

**LAVERN DEVRIES**  
Crime Writer

THE WESTERN Cape Education Department recorded a lower vandalism rate during the mid-year school holidays, compared with last year.

The dip is in spite of the much longer mid-year school holiday because of the



**SMS the Argus**  
SMS your views to 32027  
Each SMS costs R1

While the number of reported cases of vandalism had dropped from 33 last year to 30 this year, the costs of repairing the damage were

slashed by more than half, said Bronagh Casey, spokeswoman for Education MEC Donald Grant, yesterday.

Last year the estimated cost of damage after the holiday period was R549 050. This year it was R290 820.

Despite the school holidays having been extended by two weeks because of the World Cup, less crime was

reported. The Western Cape Education Department attributed this, in part, to the increased police visibility and heightened security around schools during the month-long football tournament.

The additional security was organised by the department's Safe Schools, in co-operation with police and private security firms, Casey said.

"In most of the cases, the efforts by the perpetrators were foiled by school alarm systems, therefore causing only minor damage such as broken windows," Grant said.

At least 317 schools are fitted with alarms and 60 schools have CCTV cameras.

While Casey could not confirm whether any of the affected schools were among

the province's 109 high-risk schools, she said the bulk of the incidents were in the metro central education district.

This consists of, among other areas, Gugulethu, Manenberg, Hanover Park and parts of Athlone.

The worst hit school was Citrusdal Primary in the Cape winelands.

"Nothing was stolen. How-

ever, the perpetrators set one of the classrooms alight.

"Thankfully the foreman and the police arrived at the school and managed to control it before it spread to other classrooms."

It was the first time that school was targeted by vandals, resulting in damage estimated at R40 000, she said.

Other schools, like Hout Bay

Secondary reported that tiles were missing from a roof, while windows were damaged and tap handles stolen at Ebenezer Primary in Paarl.

Repairs to some schools have already been completed, according to Casey.

Others, with more serious damage, would be completed as soon as possible.

lavern.devries@nrl.co.za

# Surgical advance puts baby on path to normal life

**BETHANY FIRNHABER**  
Staff Reporter

A BABY boy from Malmesbury has had an innovative surgical procedure that should vastly improve his quality of life – thanks to the expertise of a professor who has spent three years perfecting the technique.

Professor Frank Graewe, head of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Tygerberg Hospital, says that in years gone by, seven-month-old Sibabalwe Mnyama would have had "very scary" surgery that involved cutting the forehead wide open.

That was the way doctors freed the bones of the face so they could push them outwards in cases like that of Sibabalwe, who was born with Apert syndrome, a genetic disorder that left his face sunken and his fingers and toes slightly webbed.

But thanks to Graewe's work, cutting open and separating the entire mid-face from the skull was avoided.

Instead, Graewe inserted a thin, stainless steel pin through the baby's cheekbones that was connected to a "distraction" device, which looks like the stabilising arm of a compass and is more commonly used to

elongate fingers.

The device is connected to the side of the skull at one end, and the steel pin at the other.

With the turn of a crank handle, it pushes the pin and cheekbones slowly forward.

Apert syndrome is rare, occurring in one of about 150 000 babies, and is characterised by premature fusing of certain bones.

Several plates in the skull grow together too soon. Bones in the middle of the face don't grow as they should, leading to a recessed face and pronounced forehead and jaw. Often people with the syndrome have difficulty closing their mouths and eyes.

If left untreated, the disorder can cause blindness from overexposed corneas, brain damage from pressure on an unmoving skull, and blocked nasal passages.

Graewe calls his new method the "midface distraction".

It was the result, he said, of a focus nowadays on "doing things small, less invasively".

"You can actually elongate the bone by just pushing on it. It works tremendously well."

The method was also faster, less painful and less risky than



**SPECIALIST CARE:** Professor Frank Graewe, head of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Tygerberg Hospital, checks on baby Sibabalwe Mnyama, whom he is treating for facial deformities as a result of Apert syndrome. PICTURE: MATTHEW JORDANIAN

the older procedures, Graewe said. "Other procedures can take four to five hours, but I've got this one down to 30 minutes, and there's almost no blood loss."

Ideally, the procedure was performed when a child was about six months old, with the bones still soft, but not too soft.

Baby Sibabalwe had the pro-

cedure in the first week of last month, and has been in hospital for the duration of the World Cup. He is to be released into his mother's care in a week, but will return in three months for the pin and distraction device to be removed.

"The child is breathing a little bit better. By bringing the face forward, there's more space

for breathing," Graewe said.

He worked with the Smile Foundation, an NGO dedicated to helping children with facial deformities. The Smile Foundation provided nursing staff, transport and coaching for Sibabalwe's mother.

"I was worried a little bit, but not too much," said mother Fezeka Mnyama. "And I am

very happy with the results."

Children with Apert syndrome often have more than 20 operations throughout their childhood and adolescence to keep up with their growing bodies. Graewe hopes that with his new method, Sibabalwe will not have to endure so many.

# Shack-dwellers find a new home sweet home – and pets come too

**HILLEL ARON**  
Staff Reporter

DISADVANTAGED families in Melkbosstrand have started to move out of their tin shacks and into new brick homes – and they're taking their pets with them.

The move comes after the Cape Argus reported late last month that residents of Rietvlei Bos, a makeshift community situated outside Melkbosstrand, were to get new homes for free.

But the catch was that they would not be allowed to take their pets.

At that time upset residents insisted that they would rather stay in their existing ramshackle homes than move and leave their pets behind.

But after the Cape Argus contacted Hans Smit, the executive director of housing for the city, the housing developers appear to have had a change of heart.

"I approached the developers, and they seemed to be quite willing to come to a joint solution," said Smit.

He was not aware of the details of the arrangement that had been made between the developers and the residents.

Melkbosch Village is an 18ha, R400 million housing development by Asrin Property Developers.

Under an agreement with the City of Cape Town, 100 of the 450 units are to be subsidised homes, provided free to disadvantaged people.

Smit said of the controversy about the pets: "It's part of the learning curve. They have a new community there, and they need to start building bridges."

The new residents will also have a learning curve to contend with. Before moving into their homes, the families were admonished by police not to



**FURRY FRIENDS:** New homeowner Johannes Erasmus with his two dogs. PICTURE: TRACEY ADAMS

throw their rubbish on the ground outside, and not to let their children play in the middle of the street.

Patty Diedericks, a woman living in the area who helps ensure that pets are healthy, told the families about cleaning up after their dogs, with mixed results.

Yesterday Wayne Lewis, 22, who has just moved to Melkbosch Village with his grandparents and his dog Snooby, said: "It's a good place to start a new life."

Johannes Erasmus lived in the informal settlement of Oogieskraal for 25 years. His roof was made of plastic bags, and when it rained the lounge would fill with water.

Yesterday Erasmus stood in the doorway of his new house, smiling proudly in the pouring rain.

Two small dogs stood outside shivering. He had more dogs, but they ran away.

"They preferred the bush," he said. – *Additional reporting by Tracey Adams*

hillel.aron@nrl.co.za

# Steven Rom

LIQUOR MERCHANTS & EXPORTERS

<p><b>PALMHOF CENTRE</b> KLOOF STREET CAREENS</p> <p><b>OPEN TIMES</b> 9 am - 8 pm SAT 9 am - 5 pm</p>	<p><b>BAY POINT</b> STANLEY PLACE THREE ANCHOR BAY Tel: 021 439 1112</p> <p><b>OPEN TIMES</b> 9 am - 8 pm SAT 9 am - 5 pm</p>	<p><b>GALLERIA CENTRE</b> 76 REGENT ROAD SEA POINT Tel: 021 439 6043</p> <p><b>OPEN TIMES</b> 9 am - 6 pm SAT 9 am - 4 pm</p>	
--	---	---	--

**Jack Daniels**  
**R169<sup>50</sup>**

**Johnnie Walker Red label**  
**R129<sup>50</sup>**

**Smirnoff Triple Distilled**  
**R99<sup>50</sup>**

**Hansa Marzen Gold Case (24 x 340ml)**  
**R109<sup>50</sup>**

**Smirnoff Storm 6 Pack (6 x 300ml)**  
**R44<sup>50</sup>**

## Wines

**De Waal Young Vines Chenin Blanc**  
**R19<sup>90</sup>**

**Landskroon Paul Hugo Red**  
**R29<sup>50</sup>**

**Waverley Hills Organic Cabernet & Shiraz**  
**R29<sup>50</sup> each**

**La Motte Sauvignon Blanc**  
**R49<sup>50</sup>**

• All products 750 ml unless otherwise stated • Cash & Carry only  
• Not for sale to persons under 18 • Offer expires on Tuesday 20th July

## Pedestrians 'exploded' in crash

SO MUTILATED are the bodies of those killed in a high-speed chase between Pretoria police and a gang of suspected robbers that police are battling to identify the dead.

Six people, including three suspects, were killed when the suspects lost control of their BMW and crashed into a bakkie before they ploughed into a group of pedestrians on Tuesday.

Police said yesterday that they had identified only two of the dead, including one of the suspects who was thrown from the car.

A policeman said it looked as though some of the pedestrians had "exploded" when the BMW hit them.

"There was literally nothing left of some of them. It was really gruesome," he said. – Staff Reporter

## Ex-political reporter Norman West dies

**NURENE JASSIEM**  
Staff Reporter

FORMER top political journalist Norman West died after a short illness. He was 70.

West, who began his working life as a teacher before becoming one of the country's finest political writers, was described by friends and former colleagues as "incredibly moral" and resourceful.

The former Sunday Times journalist died at his Walmer Estate home on Monday. He is survived by his wife, Pearl, three children and two grandchildren.

Veteran journalist and author Max du Preez, who worked with West in the 1980s, described him as a "dapper man".

"We called him 'The Inspector'," Du Preez said. West spent the greater part of his career, from the 1970s to the mid-1990s, working as a political correspondent for the Sunday Times at its Cape Town bureau.

Raymond Joseph, a former Cape editor of the Sunday Times, said West was well-connected and had an "extremely generous spirit".

"He had a room in his house that acted as a pub where politicians, journalists and businessmen would meet for drinks. The rule was that everything discussed in the room remained off the record," Joseph said.

Murray McNally, whom West mentored in 1977, described him as "incredibly moral".

He said West was also resourceful and one of the few journalists who worked well with money.

West saved the money he earned from freelance work and invested in the stock market. As a result, he was able to retire at 56 and travel the world with his wife.

A memorial service is to be held on Tuesday at the Milnerton Golf Club.

**WE HOSTED THE CUP!**  
**WE FELT THE GEES!**  
NOW WE'VE PACKAGED THE MEMORIES!  
**DON'T MISS YOUR COPY OF THE CAPE ARGUS ON FRIDAY, 16 JULY FOR OUR VERY SPECIAL 2010 SOUVENIR SUPPLEMENT**