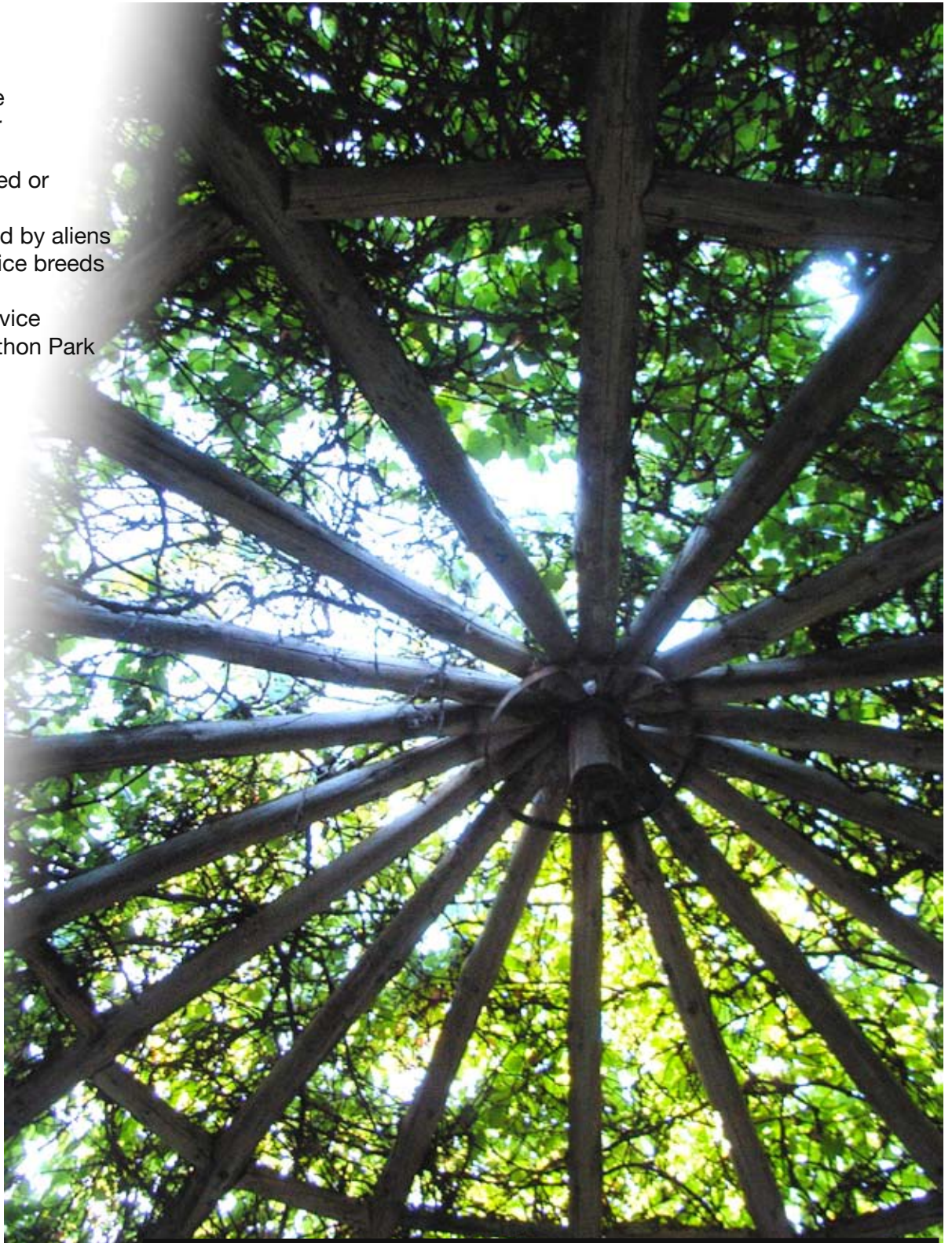


PARKLANDSNEWS

March 2008 Number 30

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The answer: Bonython Park
AGM notice



Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association Inc
PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall Adelaide 5000 Web: www.adelaide-parklands.org

President's letter

At the commencement of 2008, I would like to bring to your attention some Parklands issues that recently have been exercising my thinking.

Victoria Park—at last sanity prevails

Fortunately, sanity has prevailed and we will not see the development of a massive corporate facility in Victoria Park. But it is now imperative that the Adelaide City Council moves quickly to clean up the area, restore the heritage grandstand and landscape the surrounds to justify to the citizens of Adelaide and the 'development' lobby that the corporate facility was never a viable proposal. Victoria Park can be one of the gems in the Adelaide Parklands and a monument to good open space planning.

Action needed on the Thebarton SA Water depot site and the old netball courts on Anzac Highway

I draw your attention to NO ACTION from the government to return the SA Water depot site to Parklands. State governments have announced the return of this government reserve for over the past 23 years, but when will it occur? In 1985, the Bannon government received a report from Commissioner Tomkinson recommending that various government reserves, including the SA Water site,

should be returned to Parklands. Various governments over the years have proudly announced the handing back of the site and Premier Rann has re-announced their return on at least TWO occasions. Whenever the government needs a good news story, it wheels out the SA Water depot.

Another site of shame is the former netball courts along Anzac Highway. Ever since Netball SA transferred its operations to the ETSA Stadium in 1998, the courts have remained an eyesore that blights one of our most prominent gateways to the city. Surely after nine years it would not be too much to ask that the Adelaide City Council return the area as open space by replacing the old unused bitumen courts with grass and landscaping for public use. What is the problem?

Heritage listing progress

In the last issue of *Parklands News*, I drew attention to the politics behind the former Liberal government deferring the national heritage listing of the Adelaide Parklands. After the election of the federal Labor government, I contacted Ms Kate Ellis, Member for Adelaide, who is also now a new minister in the Labor government, to take up heritage listing with her colleague, Peter Garrett, Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts. I know that both the state government and the Adelaide City Council have raised some difficulties with the listing, but your Association will continue to pursue the heritage listing at state, national and world level because of the additional protection this process offers against future predators who consider the Parklands cheap land for their particular use.

Forthcoming Annual General Meeting

The forthcoming Annual General Meeting and election of the committee and officers provides opportunities for new people to become involved.

Unfortunately, our Secretary, Brian Mitchell, is not able to continue for health reasons, and we need a new Secretary. Please contact me on 0429 235 545 if you would be willing to stand for election and take on this role.

By joining the committee and/or by offering your time, you would have opportunities to help in developing APPA policy statements on various Parklands issues. For example, there is a need to have input into the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy that is being developed by the Park Lands Authority. Also, we need to keep up to date on the



proposed 'Marg' hospital developments and APPA should have a clear policy on its position regarding the use of what is actually Adelaide Parklands for the proposed new hospital. At the moment, our preferred position is that the railway yards, which are no longer needed, be returned to Parklands, and that the present Royal Adelaide Hospital site, when it is no longer needed, should be returned to Parklands. This is in line with the Association's objective that states: 'alienated areas of the Parklands are restored for recreational use, preferably as open space'. Another project someone might take up is the restoration of former railways land near the Morphett Street Bridge to Parklands. Also, water policies for the Parklands need investigation and, in particular, proposals to use the South Parklands for flood mitigation and/or wetlands.

Finances

While our Treasurer will provide a more detailed statement on our finances at the AGM, I am relieved to be able to tell you that we begin the year clear of all our financial obligations, including the heavy legal expenses incurred in fighting the Victoria Park battles. Let me congratulate all those who have helped out with donations that helped us take on these battles over the last year. It is now time to build up our funds and establish a reserve to meet the inevitable future challenges we will face to protect the open space characteristics of our unique Parklands.

Finally, let me quote Lewis Cohen, Deputy Mayor of Adelaide in 1910, who said:

'The parks are the pride and glory of this city—the best and greatest asset it has, or ever can have. To every generation they are becoming more valuable. Let us, therefore, keep them inviolate, keep them intact, keep them sacred from the hands of the despoiler.'

Jim Daly

ISSUES ON THE TABLE

World Heritage listing

Land grabs at Victoria Park, RAH site and railway yards

Biodiversity survey

Heritage listing of 1889 Arbor Day plantings

Adelaide Bowling Club's activities

Hurtle Square redevelopment

Britannia intersection land grab

Dying elms and other trees

SACA car park push

Alienated Parklands

Flood mitigation works

Watering regime during drought

Front cover: Vine-covered arbour in Wita Wirra (Park 18), just west of Himeji Garden. Photo taken December 2007 by Gunta Groves.

Letter to the editor

On 13 January, the *Sunday Mail* published an article with the headline, 'Park's browned off setback'. It was highly critical of the Adelaide City Council's decision not to lease part of Victoria Park to allow a redevelopment that included a large permanent building for the Motor Sport Board and the SA Jockey Club. The article called for 'immediate action and an end to stagnation at the hands of those determined to resist change'.

Before the article was written, the government had already decided not to legislate to override the Council and had announced that the existing removable building would be replaced with another removable building. Hence, the article could be dismissed as a mere grumble.

However, besides quoting several prominent people that were disappointed about the decision, the article noted that the State Opposition was still pursuing legislation to override the Council. It also publicised a 'Sensational Adelaide' website petition to change the decision because it is 'short-sighted' and 'based upon fear and not reason'.

Most likely, the proponents of the building in the Park will not get their way. However, it is of concern that the *Sunday Mail* chose to publish a partisan article perpetuating the myth that opponents of the building are 'afraid of change' and

'don't share a vision of a South Australia that wants to be prosperous and bold'. To discredit that myth, APPA should be bold in determining how the Park should be developed for the future.

At present the future of the Park is in limbo while the ACC waits for the SAJC to decide what it proposes to do. In the *Sunday Mail* article, the SAJC Chairman was quoted as saying, 'if the SAJC committee agreed, the club would stay and had flagged plans to upgrade the existing stand with funds from the \$80m Cheltenham sale'. (Sic)

If the SAJC decides that it wants to continue racing at Victoria Park, the decision to do so should not be automatic just because horse racing is an existing use of the Park. Alternatives should be considered in the light of their potential contribution to the beauty and utility of the Parklands, the city and the state when weighed against any potential disadvantage to the horseracing industry.

The Victoria Park Redevelopment Plan of 2007 provided facilities for only a few hundred racegoers. Car parking, seating, catering and toilet facilities would not cope with more. The redeveloped racecourse would not have handled the large numbers that attend traditional race meetings. It would have been a boutique course capable of providing racing

broadcasts but suitable for only a few racegoers on the course.

An alternative to the SAJC redeveloping the course at Victoria Park would be to redevelop the Morphettville course to increase the number of meetings that could be held there each year. (Two concentric tracks might be feasible.) If that were done, the cost advantages of rationalisation onto one site and better utilisation of existing facilities would enhance the financial position of the SAJC and enable it to do more for the racing industry.

All of the buildings in Victoria Park that were to be removed under the 2007 development plan are eyesores. If horse racing were discontinued, all could be removed. This and closure of the track would provide greatly enhanced opportunities for landscaping, sports fields and other outdoor recreation.

APPA should now determine a positive policy on the future of Victoria Park. We should determine whether racing should be discontinued. If so, how or by what process should the Park then be redeveloped? We should make our views known and be advocates of change, not merely reactionary opponents as imputed by the *Sunday Mail*.

Richard Brown

WHAT IS THIS?

Find out the answer to this question on page 7.

NEXT NEWSLETTER COPY DEADLINE:

30 April 2008

Always in search of pithy articles, educational information and comment on current issues



PARKLANDS—PARCHED OR PRESERVED?

Very few of us have been able to escape the impact of the current water restrictions and, with only minimal rainfall, we have had to find ways to make the best possible use of our precious mains water allocations.

Councils are in no better position because, although they are not required to water to quite such a strict regime, nor confine themselves to the use of buckets, they are responsible for the maintenance of very valuable and extensive long-established public assets.

As councils generally pay heavily for the water they use, this factor alone has acted in the past as a deterrent against over-watering. More and more councils are investing in moisture-sensing technology, more sophisticated irrigation systems and a strict regime of sustainable plantings and maintenance in order to reduce their use of water.

SA Water has required councils to reduce the amount of water they use by given percentages over recent years. This has required councils to install more water meters, to read them on a regular basis and to determine what should be the highest priorities for the use of the reduced quantities of water that they have been allocated.

From the point of view of the Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association, our concern is how these restrictions are impacting on the long-term viability of the Parklands, especially for the many historical and significant trees which are an essential part of the landscape of Adelaide.

The current situation in the Parklands

SA Water has advised the Adelaide City Council that its 2007–08 water use needs to be reduced by an additional 10–15 per cent over and above the 20 per cent reduction already achieved over the past five years; that is 35 per cent in total. However, SA Water is continually reviewing the management of its water resources and may impose additional reductions over the summer of 2007–08.

Council administration has advised that:

Council has been working in partnership with SA Water in implementing water restrictions within the City of Adelaide and

will be taking proactive steps to measure, monitor and manage its water use.

To achieve additional water savings within the Park Lands and Squares it will be necessary to further reduce or cease irrigating selected areas of the Park Lands.

SA Water has provided interim approval to commence irrigating to this proposed scheme subject to their final agreement.

The selection criteria in determining the priority areas for the application of irrigation water has been based on the use of the area, the associated risks and the presence of culturally significant trees or plants. Therefore priority has been given to event spaces and playgrounds.

Recent history of water restrictions

In 2002–03, the Adelaide City Council's water consumption for Parklands, streetscapes and squares was approximately 684ML. Since 2002–03, a program of irrigation initiatives has been implemented including:

- increasing its use of mains water to irrigate the Parklands in lieu of River Torrens water, to improve the quality of the riverine environment
- increasing the area under controlled irrigation, with the addition of Park 6 Community Oval, BMX track, Skate Park, and South Australia Tennis Association frontage
- extending its irrigation seasons to accommodate drier seasons (ie September to May instead of October to late March)
- installing automatic irrigation systems in 20 previously manually irrigated areas (ie Veale Gardens, Bonython Park, Osmond Gardens, Torrens Parade Grounds, River Banks)
- progressively linking all of its irrigation systems to a centrally controlled computer controlled irrigation system which is linked to its own weather station located within the Parklands, to provide a more efficient application of irrigation water to the Parklands and squares.

What happened in 2007

Between 2002–03 and 2006–07, Council reduced its overall Parkland

irrigation water usage by approximately 20 per cent, from approximately 684ML to 547ML. However, SA Water has recently advised Council that it will be required to further reduce its water use this summer by an additional 10–15 per cent; that is, up to 35 per cent in total. To enable the required savings to be achieved, Council has reviewed the Parklands and squares to determine priority areas for the application of available irrigation water. These were identified broadly as high-use event areas such as Elder Park, Rymill Park and Rundle Park, and playgrounds and areas where culturally significant trees are located within irrigated areas.

The savings will be achieved in the following ways:

- Council may continue to irrigate its streetscapes providing drippers are used and for only one irrigation event per week. Areas of turf that have no functional community benefit, such as road median strips or road verges, cannot be watered.
- The golf courses are currently irrigated using River Torrens water and are therefore exempt from the restrictions. However, in keeping with good irrigation practice, watering occurs only between 8pm and 8am, with daytime watering of the tees and greens occurring only when the temperature is high.
- SA Water has withdrawn Council's exemption to continue refilling Rymill Park Lake with mains water, due to excessive leakage. The Lake has a high evaporation rate due to its large surface area and, due to its age, loses a large amount of water by leakage through its base and sides.
- Sports fields located within the Parklands are maintained by the associated club and it is the club's responsibility to seek any exemptions required from SA Water to enable the grounds to be maintained in a 'fit for purpose' condition.
- SAJC has stopped watering its track while it determines its future at Victoria Park and because no further races are scheduled for this year. In any event, it is unlikely that the track will continue to be used without major reconstruction.

To minimise the impact of these restrictions, Council has implemented a number of measures including:

- installing drip irrigation systems to 'at risk' trees in irrigated areas

- flood irrigating stressed trees in the Parklands, using backwash water from the Adelaide Aquatic Centre
- collecting water from city buildings where flushing of fire systems and cooling towers etc is occurring
- applying water retention additives to garden beds and implementing longer turf mowing heights, and no annual floral displays are being replaced.

(The foregoing technical information has been taken from Adelaide City Council sources, for which the author expresses his appreciation.)

APPA members have expressed some concerns about the way the Council is dealing with the water restrictions and possible long-term adverse impacts on Parkland settings. The use of backwash water may be detrimental if used in too much concentration and the methods of delivering recycled water by tankers may of itself cause damage to trees and other flora.

Has the Council, in conjunction with SA Water, got the priorities right? Certainly we cannot continue to use water as an endless resource as we have done in the past.

In the long run, Council has to find a more sustainable source of water. Plans are under consideration to pipe treated effluent water from Glenelg and the idea of constructing wetlands with aquifer recharge in the South Parklands is also being investigated, together with expansion of the West Parklands wetlands.

There is no doubt that the staging of major events with associated carparking puts severe stress on the Parklands. We have a Council that places great store on the number of visitors it attracts to the city, and a state government that is committed to increased tourism to boost the economy. It is strange that those people who promote the city for increasing tourism and visitation do not seem to understand the fundamental role the Parklands play in this promotion. If they did, Parklands maintenance and preservation, including an adequate allocation of water, would be given top priority.

David Plumridge AM

*Committee member, APPA
Committee member, South East City Residents Association (SECRA)
Adelaide City Council Councillor (Area)*

Victoria Park visited by aliens

When things can't be explained, we often resort to the 'alien visitation' claim. 'Crop circles', mysterious abductions and pregnancies spring to mind. Here's one closer to home. The grass on the horse-racing track at Victoria Park is mostly dead. In January, when this was written, the grass on each side of the track edge, and all over the rest of the Park, was alive, though not thriving.

The track grass started to look very sick in the week before Christmas and, by the New Year, 90 per cent of the grass was pale yellow and crisp. The South Australian Jockey Club held its last race meeting for the year (and for the foreseeable future) on 14 December 2007. In the week before that, SAJC staff mowed the track and moved the inside guard rail of the straight inwards. Whatever was done to the track grass was done before the guard rail was moved. Questions directed to the SAJC resulted in two separate explanations that didn't fit the evidence.

Explanation 1: The track is not being watered anymore and that is why the grass is dying. Rebuttal: The grass died in a precise pattern that was not related to the pattern made by sprinklers. The sprinklers have always watered more than just the track grass. They inevitably

watered arcs off the track. The grass immediately beside the guard rails and outside them was green and no arcs of dying grass existed. At the southern end of the straight was a precise diagonal division across the track (see photo at bottom). On one side was green grass, merging with green grass beside the track. On the other side of the diagonal was the dead yellow grass.

Explanation 2: The grass that remains green is kikuyu and the heavy loam has retained some moisture to allow it to survive. Rebuttal: The track had a heavy preponderance of kikuyu, most of which was dead. There was no pattern of die-off following grass types.

The SAJC, as the tenant of Victoria Park, has the responsibility of looking after the horse-racing track. Looking after tracks is part of its core business. Yet, the Victoria Park track is mostly dead, and not from a lack of water. If the surrounding grass, some of which has never seen a sprinkler in its life, can survive, why can't the track grass? Is it that a message is being sent by 'aliens'? Is the message that the Park is a dustbowl without the presence of the SAJC? I will leave you to make up your own minds, with the help of the photos.

Gunta Groves

Left: Northern end of the track just past the finishing post. The track is brown, the area inside the track loop has not been watered but is still green in January.

Both photos taken by Gunta Groves on 6 January 2008.

Below: Southern end of the straight with a clear geometric delineation between green grass and dead grass which does not follow grass type. There is kikuyu on both sides of the division.



WORLD'S BEST PRACTICE BREEDS NEW SPECIES !

It has taken 23 years of development but finally Adelaide has done it. After a couple of decades of F1 and V8 motor racing, the Adelaide Parklands now boast a new tree species developed and refined by careful pruning and training. *Eucalyptus motorii* ssp *clipsalia* prefers compacted soils and companion plantings rich in metals. It is ideally suited to situations where over-hanging branches are undesired and natural beauty and balance are not required.



All photos taken by Gunta Groves around the V8 motor racing track, February 2008.

SAVE THE ADELAIDE PARKLANDS

A SKIRMISH MAY HAVE BEEN WON BUT THE WAR CONTINUES!

The campaign to save Victoria Park appears to have been won. Donations to APPA helped enormously. Other threats loom such as currently alienated Parklands not being returned to public use. Besides being a member, please give generously to ensure that APPA puts up the best fight possible.

You can donate by:
sending a cheque or money order, made out to
'Adelaide Parklands Preservation Assoc Inc', or
making an electronic payment into the APPA bank account:
BSB: 015-310 Account no: 4063-53172

Postal address: The Treasurer, APPA, PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000

The Adelaide Parklands and future generations will thank you

USE OUR E-MAIL SERVICE

Some people have already seen the light (pun intended) and sent in their e-mail addresses. If you would like to receive the *Parklands News* by e-mail as a PDF, fill in the form below and mail it to the following address:

Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association Inc
PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall
Adelaide 5000.

You can also download PDFs of the current and past newsletters from our Web site at
<www.adelaide-parklands.org>.

E-mailing newsletters to members saves us printing and mailing costs.

Gunta Groves

I would like to receive the *Parklands News* by e-mail instead of in the post.

My e-mail address is:

Name Signature

Address

The answer: Bonython Park

**First there was Cirque du Soleil.
Then there was Schutzenfest.
Please, enough is enough!**

Every time the Cirque du Soleil occupies Bonython Park, the park is left denuded of grass. In 2007, it was no different. The previous issue of *Parklands News* carried the story on page 7.

Just four months later, Bonython Park was allowed to be used for the Schutzenfest—an annual celebration of German culture. Just a night and a day of constant tramping, and a week before and after of setting up and pulling down, denuded the tender green shoots and compacted even more the already compacted soil. What looked like a promising beginning of remediation after Cirque du Soleil left became the dead brown expanse on the right.

The Cirque du Soleil pays for the remediation of Bonython Park after its occupation. Does the Schutzenfest do the same, or does its 'cultural' standing make it exempt? Either way, this year it has caused Bonython Park to be unusable for any normal park activities and, I would have thought, unlettable for 12 months and more.

The location of the Schutzenfest in the City of Adelaide Parklands is, to me, inexplicable. Why is the main celebration of German life in South Australia

not located where the focus already exists—that is, Hahndorf? It is logical and complementary to the life and activities already there. Schutzenfest used to be held in Hahndorf and there was a real connection for patrons when they experienced the festival among the history and businesses in Hahndorf. It was a complete experience, not an artificial,

mostly beer-swilling event. Please, let's have some authenticity and also give Bonython Park a break.

Gunta Groves

Editor's note: By the time you read this, you will be able to see a heartening green haze covering the brown.



Above: Bonython Park, looking south, on 17 January 2008 after the Schutzenfest 11–12 January. Photo taken by Gunta Groves.

Editor's note: For those who are seeing this in the printed version of the newsletter, this photo is 90 per cent brown.

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM 2007-08

Adelaide Parklands Preservation Assoc Inc PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall Adelaide SA 5000

Name

Address

Telephone E-mail Date

\$20 single (full rate)

Send *Parklands News* via e-mail

\$25 family (full rate)

Donation \$.....

\$30 corporate

\$15 single (concession)

\$20 family (concession)

Method of payment

Cheque attached

Money order attached

Tick if receipt required

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE TO ENSURE THAT:

- the Parklands be available for use by the general public
- the public should, so far as practicable, have free and unrestricted access to the Parklands
- the Parklands should be reserved as a place for public recreation, leisure and enjoyment
- alienated areas of the Parklands are restored for recreational use, preferably as open space
- the character of the Parklands as a place dividing the City of Adelaide from the suburbs should be preserved
- the Parklands should be preserved and maintained in a manner that enhances their special place in the design of the City of Adelaide
- the amenity of the Parklands is not impaired by inappropriate development of nearby lands.

I agree to be bound by the Constitution of the Association. Signature

Please make cheque/money order payable to: Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association Inc (*not 'APPA'*)

Send to: Adelaide Parklands Preservation Assoc Inc, PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall Adelaide SA 5000

03/08

Committee 2007-2008

President: Jim Daly
Deputy President: Ian Gilfillan
Secretary: Brian Mitchell
Treasurer: Philip Groves

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Mike Hudson
Stephanie Johnston
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David Carver, BK Partners

Web administrator

Gunta Groves

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Sunday
20 April 2008

10am for 10.30am

DISABILITY
INFORMATION
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30 April 2008

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Membership:

Membership of the Association is open to all who support the objectives of the Association. Members receive the *Parklands News* four times a year.