

Still hoping to find missing daughter

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After 38 years, family and friends hope for a joyous Christmas

DOROTHY Vos's frail hands tremble as she absent-mindedly runs them through the small pink plastic beads on a child's necklace. Her daughter gave her the necklace the last time she saw her - 38 years ago. Isabella Hendrina Jankowitz, who was 11 or 12 at the time, would've celebrated her 50th birthday on July 14 this year. But her mother last saw her when a social worker allowed

her to attend a Christmas party at her work and then spend the weekend with her. Vos's son and Jankowitz's younger half-brother, Peter, can't contain his tears as he sits next to his mother on an old couch in their Springfield flat. "I don't know if she's still alive or if she has passed away. She was beautiful. She came for the Christmas party. There were funfair rides, clowns, bumper cars. Then she spent

the weekend. When my mom took her back, the social worker said she must stay in contact, she'll get her (Isabella) back. When she (Dorothy) went there again, they (Jankowitz's paternal family) had moved," Peter explains. Jankowitz was fostered by her father's - Dorothy's ex-husband's - parents since she was a baby. But from time to time she would visit her mother. Vos, 72, adds: "She was just gone like the wind. I even

went next door. I even asked, but they said nothing. I could hardly walk home." Peter now trawls Facebook and other social media as often as he can trying to trace his sister, but to no avail. Also trying to help find Jankowitz is family friend Beverley Viljoen, who is the same age as Jankowitz and regarded as a surrogate daughter by Vos. Her enquiries at Home Affairs have yielded no fruit because the family don't have

enough details about Jankowitz. But Viljoen is clinging to the hope that she'll be able to find her in time to surprise Vos for Christmas. "I just want to do it for her (Vos) and her son because they're awesome people and they deserve this," said Viljoen. Vos, who is partially deaf, still treasures a letter Jankowitz wrote to her and Peter in 1980, the last time they ever

heard from her. She also has a black and white photo of the two of them together. The letter, written on flowery paper, is taped together where it has worn thin. "Dear Mom and Peter... I'm sorry that I'm only writing now, but with school that has started again, I was so busy covering books... Mom must please write back soon. Give my regards to Peter and say he must be good," the girl wrote in Afrikaans. Anyone who has information about Jankowitz can contact Viljoen on 072 327 3451. @Gabi_Falanga



HOPING: Dorothy Vos, 72, holds a picture of her long-lost daughter, Isabella Hendrina Jankowitz, as well as a necklace she received from her the last Christmas they spent together in Joburg. PICTURE: ITUMELENG ENGLISH

'Yes, I put my body in front of guard'

KATE MORRISSEY

CLAIRE Ceruti faces two charges - leading or participating in an unauthorised protest action and obstructing an employee, one of the Fidelity security guards, in the performance of his duties. Reacting to this information, contained in a charge sheet from the University of Johannesburg (UJ), she said: "If his duties are to manhandle and beat up a small man, then yes, I put my own body in front of him." And in a written statement submitted as evidence, the guard Ceruti is alleged to have obstructed, Basil Knock, said Ceruti prevented him from assisting police in arresting protesters on November 6. The day before, videos of the Fidelity bouncers physically clashing with students made headlines. One video showed a woman being taken

off campus in a choke-hold. "I can't think of a single person who was hurt as a result of our action, but I know 10 people personally who were hurt by bouncers," Ceruti said. On the day cited in Knock's statement, 13 workers were arrested by police for contravening a court order prohibiting them from protesting too close to campus. The rest of the protesters, including Ceruti, were arrested that afternoon as they sat peacefully in the street in front of UJ. As they spent the night in prison, social media platforms created a hashtag, #Brixton41, in their support. In actuality, Ceruti said, there were three separate interdicts against different groups of people. The one police used to arrest them applied only to employees, not students, and that's why the court dropped charges against them, said Ceruti.

Suspended students might take legal route

THE THREE students suspended for protesting are considering legal action against the University of Johannesburg. At issue is the postponement of their disciplinary hearing from December 9 to next year by the university, which the students feel would unfairly prolong their suspension, blocking their access to the library to study. The students' lawyer, Tracey Lomax, said agreement to the postponement was on condition that the university met demands concerning access to campus and exam dates. The students want their exams to be shifted to January to allow them enough time to study. "Should these demands not be met, the students will approach the high court for relief," Lomax said in documents seen by The Star, handed to the university when it moved to postpone what should have been the disciplinary hearing. Lomax said the university representatives left the December 9 meeting to discuss her document. She received a response by email the next day. In that response, UJ refused to meet any of the students' demands and said Lomax had agreed to the postponement with no conditions. "Our client does not believe that this would be appropriate," the letter said, referring to uplifting the suspensions.

"The validity or not of these suspensions will be fully ventilated at the time of the disciplinary hearings." The document also indicated that the students would have had to take their exams during the final week of the exam period, the week of December 7. According to email records obtained by The Star, the university agreed to defer exams to the week of December 7, which it communicated to Lomax on December 4. That would have meant that one of the students, Xhama Songwevu, had to take five exams in one week. An email to Lomax said the January exams would "unacceptably inconvenience UJ and its academic staff and potentially jeopardise other students and staff." "Students' failure, refusal or neglect to study or to start preparing well in advance for their exams, knowing full well that they are not guaranteed being excused from writing their final exams, is not a fault of the university," UJ added. But in an email to The Star last week, Lomax said: "At no stage was such an agreement reached. We said we would agree subject to them lifting suspensions and allowing suspended students to write exams in January and defer their research projects." - Kate Morrissey

Tata celebrated with freedom walk



LOVED: In celebration of the legacy and memory of former president Nelson Mandela, Premier David Makhura and thousands of South Africans took part in the Mandela Remembrance Walk from Khosi Mampuru Correctional Centre to the Union Buildings. PICTURES: OUPA MOKOENA

SAKHILE NDLAZI

AN ESTIMATED 15 000 people put on their walking shoes to celebrate the legacy of anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela, in a 5km remembrance walk on Saturday. Held under the theme "Mandela's Legacy Lives on", the walk signified two years since his body made its final journey to his home in Qunu. Participants wearing white T-shirts sang along with the brass band while waving the national flag as they strolled through some of Pretoria's political heritage sites, including the Palace of Justice and Lillian Ngoyi Square. Some marvelled at the beautiful architecture while taking "selfies" next to the buildings. Passers-by took photos and cheered the procession which started at the Kgosi Mampuru II Correctional Centre and ended at the Union Buildings, where a wreath-laying ceremony was held. The same route was used to transport Madiba's body from 1 Military Hospital to the Union Buildings following his death in 2013. Walker Melanie du Toit was amazed by the strong turn-out, consisting of people from different cultures and back-

grounds. "Despite the commotion that is currently going on in the country, it is activities like these that encourages people that hope is still alive," she said. Fifteen-year-old Bathini Sangweni said: "Madiba was a fitness freak, so walking 5km is an exemplary way of commemorating his legacy and what he stood for." Leading the procession were Gauteng Premier David Makhura, Tshwane mayor Kgositso Ramokgopa and struggle veterans Sophie de Bruyn and Abdulhay Jassat. De Bruyn said she was participating in the walk to pass on to young people the values and principles that Madiba cherished. Anti-apartheid stalwart Abdulhay Jassat said it would take time for South Africa to experience the full benefits of democracy, but it was up to the young generation to finish the work that Mandela started. Makhura thanked all those who participated. "Tata must be very happy with the turnout of people here today. He is smiling in heaven, smiling on the unity that he fought tirelessly to achieve." Mandela died on December 5, 2013 at the age of 95.



ICONIC: The statue of Nelson Mandela has pride of place at the Union Buildings.

Shopping online can cost you a lot more

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ONLINE shoppers receiving or sending parcels overseas have been warned of unexpected hidden costs that could push up prices on their "cheap" items. Consumers were often caught off-guard when their shipments and gifts arrive from international origins with unexpected additional charges as many were still not aware of the regulations involved with importing products purchased online from international retailers. So said Oliver Facey, spokesman for courier service DHL Express sub-Saharan Africa. This, Facey said, could put a damper on those sending or receiving gifts from family and friends abroad this festive season. "This could lead to consumers incurring unexpected expenses. These charges also apply when receiving gifts from international origins. These are incurred when going through customs, where, depending on the type of goods being shipped, parcels may be subject to duties and taxes," he said. Facey said all shipments transported across international borders must be cleared through customs, and gifts are not necessarily exempt from duties and taxes. Facey said this was because import duties and taxes differed in each country and were usually calculated as a percentage of the items value. "But in certain instances they could also be a flat fee, depending on the product type." Facey stated that import shipments may also be subject to interventions by customs where the price, contents and country of manufacture are often investigated to mitigate a wide range of risks. "This could result in delivery delays as well as additional costs," he said, further advising that people making use of online shopping platforms to buy and send gifts over the holiday season must take note of the receiving country's regulations to avoid the recipient being liable for extra charges. "For example, customs bureaus in Angola have legislated tax-free exemptions for gifts to an individual as long as the value is less than \$350, and in Zimbabwe the limit is \$50. In South Africa, the value is R400, while Tanzania's threshold is \$15," he said. The rand's plunge could compound the situation. "The weakening rand needs to be top of mind for shoppers if they don't want to incur additional charges for gifts bought online," Facey said. @LanC_02



DEVASTATED: Dr Juliette Stander tends to spinal injury victim Galeboe Moema at Groote Schuur Hospital. PICTURE: TRACEY ADAMS

Going to take a dive? Think before you take the plunge

SIPOKAZI FOKAZI

HIS FAVOURITE team, Orlando Pirates, were to play the CAF Confederation Cup final against Tunisia at the end of last month. To spend time before the big game Galeboe Moema, 28, and his friends came to Camps Bay beach. But what started out as a day of fun for this Soweto-born telecommunications engineer would change his life forever, after he slammed his head into a sandbank during low tide - an accident that left him paralysed from his neck down. "We were so excited that day. My friends and I were diving for a few hours already. Just before the game, we decided to

go for our last dive, and that's when things went wrong. I dived into the wave with my arms stretched and went head first. That's probably the biggest mistake I've ever made, because suddenly there was a sandbank which was not there before. The tide must have got lower," he said. Moema is one of the many diving accident victims being treated at Groote Schuur Hospital's acute spinal cord injury unit in Cape Town. The unit, which treats about 200 cases of post-traumatic spinal cord injuries, treats an average of six patients a year who sustain severe neck injuries due to diving accidents. Dr Juliette Stander, a spinal-

cord injury expert who is treating Moema, said the season was the busiest time at the unit, with 75 percent of diving accident patients treated there being admitted between November and February. Most were young males between the age of 13 and 25. Stander said most injuries occurred at beaches, dams, rivers, tidal pools and swimming pools. The unit treated mostly car crash victims (about 45 percent) followed by falls (15 percent), gunshot wounds (14 percent) and stab wounds (9 percent). Assaults and diving accidents accounted for 4 percent of cases. While other hospitals,

including private hospitals, managed minor spinal injuries, the Groote Schuur unit was the only specialised unit that treated acute post-traumatic spinal injuries in the country. Stander said while some accidents were unavoidable, diving accidents were completely preventable. "Diving accidents are 100 percent preventable as long as you don't dive head first. We always advise people to dive feet first... that's the safest way to dive. Often people don't know what is happening underneath the surface of water. While they may be diving in high tide and the surface is okay to dive in, but in the case of tidal pools and the ocean, a change in tide can mean that there is suddenly a sandbank and often people hit their head against it, breaking their neck, causing a compression to their spinal cord," she said. Not only did diving accident victims lose their ability to motor function, touch or walk, most ended up having lower-respiratory infections such as pneumonia as such accidents were near-drownings. "Ultimately most victims ended up losing their jobs, because of total disability - negatively affecting the economy and their family's financial security. "Your whole life changes, and for many it results in lengthy hospitalisation."

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