Wildlife Campus

# Magazine

Gameways: 4 years of partnership

Tributes to Richard Estes and "The Sheriff"

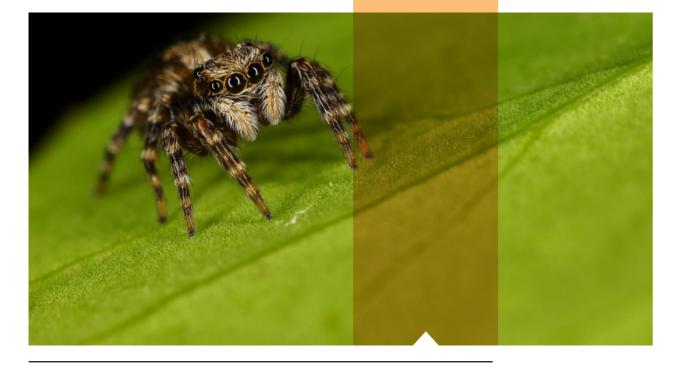
Employment

section



WildlifeCampus Magazine - February 2022 - Volume 02 - FREE

### **CONTENT**



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Editorial: Todd Kaplan	Tribute to The sheriff	Spiders, older than dinosaurs	Thank you!	Employment	Facebook Feature	
Unfortunately, the last contribution of beloved WildlifeCampus CEO Todd Kaplan.	On the 21st of January, WildlifeCampus CEO Todd Kaplan passed away very unexpectedly in his sleep.	A fear of spiders proves unneccesary after reading this article! WildlifeCampus student, Amy Holt, gives us an insight	Graeme Mitchley has been featured as a WildlifeCampus student in an earlier issue of our magazine.	Ever wondered about changing careers? In the employment section of our magazine, we tackle an important question:	Email us your favourite wildlife moments captured on photo or video, and get a 10% discount assigned to your profile.	
For this edition, Todd wrote a tribute to Richard Estes, author of all behavioural courses WildlifeCampus has on offer.	A tribute from his longtime business partner Peter Armitage and the WildlifeCampus team.	of some different types of spiders but more importantly, in the article Amy points out the many useful sides of these 8- legged creatures.	In this edition, the WildlifeCampus team thanks Graeme for his photographic contribution towards our Field Guiding course.	"How to prepare for your job search?". Hayley, from Wild Dreams Hospitality, provides us with the right questions to make an informed decision.	info@wildlifecampus.com	
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### Partners and affiliates

In the spotlight this month, we celebrate a partnership of 4 years!

Gameways is a practical training provider, based in Limpopo, offering antipoaching, wildlife management, field guiding, game lodge management and gap year programmes.

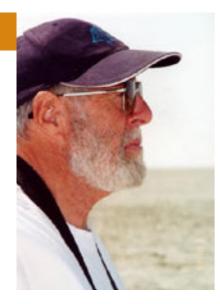
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Time to say goodbye...

David Batzofin, long-time friend of Todd and contributor to this magazine, shines a light in the shadows with a heartfelt goodbye.

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### **Richard Estes A Tribute**

First the Wikipedia entry:

#### **By WildlifeCampus CEO**

#### **Todd Kaplan**



"Richard Despard Estes (December 26, 1927 - December 6, 2021) was a biologist specialising in the behaviour of mammals in mainland Africa. He was particularly interested in studying wildebeest. This interest led Rod East, the former co-chair of the Antelope Specialist Group of the IUCN-World Conservation Union, to dub him the 'Guru of Gnu.' It has been suggested that Estes is responsible for most of the world's knowledge of wildebeest behaviour together with a great deal

Richard, Dick to those who knew him, chose to study wildebeest because he thought they were 'The most interesting animals I know', particularly in their rutting behaviour. He obtained his

doctorate in the early 1960s with a thesis on the wildebeest of the Ngorongoro Crater, in which he advanced the theory that the females' oestrus was triggered by the rumbling 'love call' of the males.

Richard spent most of the ensuing 40 years doing field work in Africa. In 2004 he began a project in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution to test his early theory using new advances in molecular chemistry.

Estes has written two quides for travellers to Africa, The Behaviour Guide to African Mammals (considered the standard reference of its kind) and The Safari Companion.

He lived with his wife in Peterborough, New Hampshire.



more.

I was first introduced to Richard in 2002 by Russel Friedman, one of the founders of Wilderness Safaris and owner of Russel Friedman Books. Russel had already introduced WildlifeCampus to Garth Thompson, author of The Guides Guide to Guiding and astutely recognised that Richard's Masterpiece: The Behaviour Guide to African Mammals, would make for an excellent series of Courses.

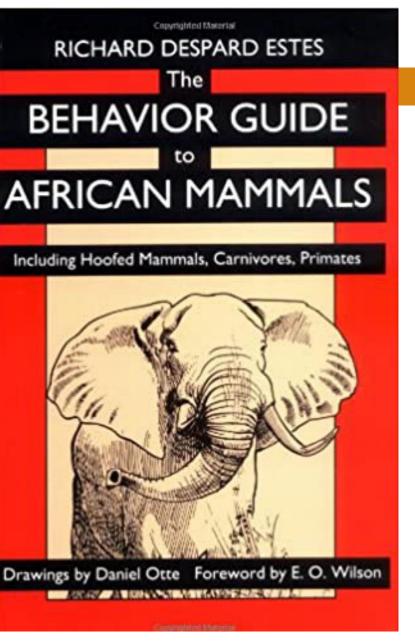
Richard was immediately enthused with the idea and concept and readily agreed to collaborate. To quote his daughter Anna "he loved nothing more than sharing his knowledge of animal behaviour".

We did have one problem though; we couldn't get hold of any kind of digital version of the text or imagery. This is a 611-page book with dense text and thousands of drawings and illustrations.

We ended up taking a hardcopy to a company that scanned it and produced an OCR version but without any spaces between words! In effect we had a 600page book consisting of a single word, of ± one million letters. The dedicated WildlifeCampus team spend several months converting it back into sentences.

In short order WildlifeCampus began offering The Behaviour Guide to Carnivores, The Behaviour Guide to Herbivores, The Behaviour Guide to Primates and later on The Behaviour Guide to Mammals of the South African Lowveld. Over the past 20 years, hundreds of students have engaged with his courses and are remarkably better off for it. During the past two decades, I was fortunate enough to meet up with Dick whenever he flew into South Africa. He would in fact ask us to retain his author

royalties for when he visited, so we had the distinct pleasure of covering his local travel costs. Whether a trip to the Kruger or rediscovering the Giant Sable antelope in Angola. I even cooked for him once.



"The Behaviour Guide to African Mammals by Richard Estes is considered the standard reference of its kind."

For all the acclaim and successful that he achieved over the course of 40 years in the field, he remained a thoughtful, humble man; slight of stature but with a towering intellect, and an undiminished passion for wildlife.

To celebrate his life, and in tribute to his immense contribution to the understanding of animal behaviour, WildlifeCampus is offering a free **Richard Estes Course to the first 40** students who enquire.

Thanks Dick, we'll miss you!

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# 66 Tribute to the sheriff ,

"At 6.30 pm on Thursday night I had a drink with Todd at work (I had a glass of wine and Todd had a Coke light). Eighteen hours later I was helping lower his coffin into a grave at Westpark Cemetery. Todd Kaplan's sudden death shocked all of us. He died gently in his sleep.

Todd was taken far too early and I had only completed half of my journey with him. I started working with him 21 years ago and if God had not intervened I am sure I would have worked with him for another 21 years. Todd would have turned 50 on 19 September 2022.

A bit of a history of Todd and Anchor/ myself. When I ran Africam, an internet wildlife business, in 1999 I met Todd and we started WildlifeCampus – a wildlife education business. It was his passion and business life and he has run this for over 20 years now, educating tens of thousands of people globally about wildlife. He has a science degree

and worked as a game ranger at the Kruger. When the Nasdaq bombed in 2001, I went back to work as an analyst and Todd and I decided to keep Wildlifecampus running – well it was 100% him and I had another day job. I provided a bit of funding and met with him every month or two, or three. It was not particularly lucrative for him, but he loved it and didn't fancy a corporate job anywhere.

Todd always told me that I was an entrepreneur and I would leave corporate again and start another business – he said he would wait for me and would be there when I did so.

After a year or two I told him I was unlikely to do so for a number of years and urged him to "get a job". He waited. Nine years later (!) I left Investec and started Anchor. He was always going to be there from the beginning, and it was not even a discussion. He set up everything we needed from day one.

I'm going to miss Todd, I already miss him. There was more to Todd than the guy who paid my salary. Much more..."

Peter Armitage, CEO Anchor Group

I met Todd for the first time in 2015 when Eloise introduced us. I was impressed to say the least, his tall figure, the calm way he had over him and while being extremely busy, he took time to make coffee, have a smoke and a chat with us.

Little did I know back then, that from 2016, when I moved to South Africa the visits to the office would occur more regular, always with the coffee, offered by Todd, followed with a quick catch up on the balcony.

More serious matters would take our meeting to a board room, usually a long discussion followed around the WildlifeCampus website. The site, built in the late 90s offers a ton of functionality, insight in statistics and is highly secure. All measures set in place by Todd, making him very proud and over 20 years later still proving to be irreplacable.

In 2017 our son was born, Todd would inform the whole Anchor Group by email on the arrival of the "WildlifeCampus baby".

Later that year I ended up in the hospital for a week, Todd would be one of the first to send me some jokes on WhatsApp to lighten the situation.

I got to know Todd in a short time on many different levels.

One thing we particularly liked sharing was a passion for wildlife and the photography thereof. Whenever he planned a trip he would send me a message and we would plan a drop-off of the camera at the offices. He would return the camera with coffee, the regular catch up on the balcony and biltong...

Todd, I'll miss dropping off the camera, the coffee you made, our silly WhatsApp jokes and especially your input on WildlifeCampus!

Jonathan Acx, WildlifeCampus

"Imagine being given your dream job with all the support and tools you need to make it amazing. That's exactly how it was working for Todd Kaplan."

When I got the call back in February 2013 to say that Todd was looking for someone to run WildlifeCampus, I was extremely excited, but terrified at the same time. It was exactly what I was looking for, but a new challenge I wasn't sure I could handle. I arrived for my interview and was greeted by a tall, professional, obviously kind-hearted man. I cannot recall how long I was there, but it felt like we chatted for hours. Not only did I leave with what would become the best job anyone could ask for, but with a mentor who would teach me everything I know.

In the first days, we worked remotely from Todd's home office in Gallo Manor. It was a beautiful office, with a board room and server room. There was always good coffee, friendly conversation during breaks, and either a cat or dog to pop in and come say hi. I got to know his lovely family and particularly enjoyed exploring their garden, which had the coolest carnivorous plant display I'd ever seen.

As Anchor Capital and its staff complement grew, we moved from Gallo Manor to the main office in Bryanston. Todd became more involved with Anchor and trusted me to run WildlifeCampus as he had taught me. However, no matter how busy he was, he was always available, interested in what we were doing and did everything he could to be involved. I am not sure how he pulled it all off, but he did. Flawlessly.

In the almost 9 years of working for him, he taught me many things. One thing that stands out right away is that every situation presents an opportunity. Whether it is good, bad or neither, you have to learn something and make the most of it. I will never forget the story he once told me about how he edited the wilderness navigation course while in traction after major back surgery. He explained that he had to lay still in a very awkward position for weeks, so he utilised the time to develop course content. He would share the stories of the beginning of WildlifeCampus and what he and Peter had to overcome to get it to where it is. I think I speak for everyone that knew him, Todd told great stories. Todd paved the way for me to run WildlifeCampus operations. He was an

Todd paved the way for me to run WildlifeCampus operations. He was an excellent teacher, smart in how he did things, managed his time very well and paid attention to details. He even took the time to mark a new box of staples with the date he opened



#### Todd Kaplan: co-founder of Anchor Group and CEO of Anchor Group subsidiary, Ripple Effect 4 (WildlifeCampus)

it, to watch how long it took to finish them to the end.

Todd will never be forgotten. His impact will resonate for many years to come, and we will take everything we have learned from him to keep his legacy alive.

I miss you Todd. Thank you for everything – you know what you did for all of us, "E"

#### Eloise Acx, COO WildlifeCampus

If you would like to share some words for Todd, please email them to info@wildlifecampus.com and we will include them in future editions of this magazine.

Indeed, you have no reason to fear spiders.

66

# Spiders

### **Older than dinosaurs**

#### **By WildlifeCampus student**

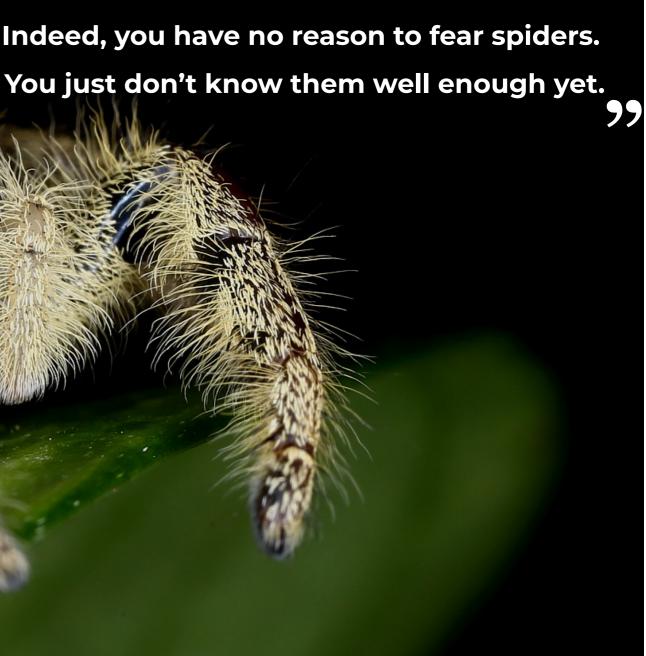
**Amy Holt** 

Spiders evolved 380 million years ago, long before dinosaurs walked the Earth. They have populated every continent on Earth apart from Antarctica. However, with arachnophobia (fear of spiders) considered as one of the most common animal phobias, spiders don't have it easy.

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The misconceptions of spiders are having a detrimental effect on conservation efforts. We need to change fear of spiders to fascination and wonder. Spider bites are rare and few species are toxic. Often, spiders appear in horror movies and are associated with Halloween - triggering a perceived threat and disgust of spiders. Yet, spiders serve a purpose in existence. Due to their abundance, spiders are the most important predators of insects. This is incredibly important in controlling agricultural pests and reducing the spread of mosquito-borne diseases. Indeed, you have no reason to fear spiders. You just don't know them well enough yet.

The spider's ability to spin webs is largely unique within the animal kingdom. The strength of a web is dependent not only on the strength of the spun silk, but also on the web's design itself. Orb webs are the most familiar looking spider webs and they look like a wheel with spokes. This web is composed of a very strong external frame. It's estimated that these webs came to be around 100 million years ago when flying insects started to evolve. Hence, the reason why these webs are constructed vertically in areas that get significant flying insect traffic. Cobwebs are commonly seen indoors, and are jumbles of threads typically attached to the top of a structure, such as a ceiling. The messy complex design of cobwebs is what makes them so effective. There are sticky droplets at the end of the dangling threads that sit at floor level, acting as a snare. When an insect walks across this thread and breaks it, it's simultaneously stuck and lifted up into the web by the contracting thread.



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#### Augacephalus junodi - Golden baboon tarantula © Amy Holt

Funnel webs, as you could probably guess, are shaped like a funnel. They are large, flat horizontal webs with openings at both ends so the spider can escape. It is the perfect ambush structure. Sheet webs are flat sheets of silk between blades of grass or branches. When creating sheet webs, spiders spin a net of crisscrossed threads above the sheet. Flying insects often end up hitting the net and bouncing into the sheet web. These webs are frequently damaged so, any holes have to be quickly patched up before they get too bad. Triangle webs, as the name suggests, are built in the shape of a triangle. Three strands of silk are connected with thread to create a very simple web. The thread used for these webs is fuzzy, which helps trap and smother insects. The Uloboridae family is the only family of spider without venom glands, so their web's fuzzy material compensates for the lack of their venomous bite. Next time you see a spider web, take a moment to appreciate the intricate design work of nature's arachnid architects.

Some species of spiders, for example orb-weaver spiders, incorporate UV-reflective silk strands into their webs. This attracts certain insects, while simultaneously warning away larger animals, like birds. The UV-reflective silk is advantageous to spiders because, if a bird were to fly through the web, the spider would temporarily lose its ability to capture prey. These spider webs have inspired Arnold Glas to design bird-friendly glass. ORNILUX Bird Protection Glass has a patterned, UVreflective coating that is visible to birds, but virtually transparent to the human eye. This helps to reduce bird collisions with glass buildings.



Next time you see a spider web, take a moment to appreciate the intricate design work of nature's arachnid architects.

We continue to look to nature to inspire new innovative ideas. Spiders have also inspired double-sided sticky tape to heal wounds.

Scientists at Massachusetts Institute of Technology have designed a surgical tape that can adhere to and seal wounds in seconds. Its inspired by the way spiders release a 'glue' to catch their prey during the rain. Spiders secrete a sticky material containing charged polysaccharides that absorb water from the surface of an insect almost instantly, leaving a small dry patch the glue can then stick to. Likewise, scientists used polyacrylic acid on the tape to absorb water from wet body tissues, which then activated the glue to stick fast. The research is still in the early days but, there is hope that in the future it can be used to suture soft or fragile tissues in the human body.

Every spider makes silk, but not all spiders make webs. Silk can be used for many things, including making nests, hinges for trapdoors, egg sacs, and for ballooning. The practice of ballooning involves sail-like structures which, enable spiders to travel distances by riding wind currents. Spider silk is the strongest, most flexible known natural biomaterial. Some types of silk can stretch more than five times the length of the original strand. Spiders are able to produce up to seven types of silk, each type produced by one of its seven silk glands. An individual spider does not possess all seven glands but has at least three if its male or four if its female. Female spiders have the cylindriform gland for producing egg sac silk.

The achniform gland produces silk that binds up and envelops prey. While, the ampullate gland produces non-sticky dragline silk which, is used to connect the spider to the web and functions as safety lines. Dragline silk is the strongest kind of silk because it must support the weight of the spider. The pyriform gland produces attaching threads and attachment discs that anchor a silk thread to a surface or to

another thread. Flagelliform gland produces the web material that makes up the core fibres of sticky silk that helps prevent prey from getting out of the web. Whereas, the aggregate gland produces droplets that produce the surface part of sticky silk and creates the adhesives that are deposited along the threads. Mating glands are for producing sperm webs on which males deposit sperm. Few spiders have good eyesight. They

rely instead on touch, vibration and taste stimuli to navigate and find their prey. Jumping spiders have the most developed and complex eyes among all arthropods. They have four pairs of eyes giving the spiders nearly 360 degree vision. The principal eyes, right in the centre of the spider's head, pick up detail and colour, a rear set to look



Jumping spider (Plexippus paykulli) © Guy Degrande

backwards, a middle set, and the foremost detect motion. Jumping spiders are the only spiders to see full colour ranges. Their eyesight is the secret behind their ability to successfully stalk and pounce on prey with impressive precision.

Jumping spiders use their silk to make little shelters instead of webs. Further, they use their silk as a dragline while jumping. That way, if it does fall, it can safely control its descent. As well as good eyesight, jumping spiders are known for their swift reflexes and leaping abilities. They can leap more than 20 times their own body length, propelled by their back legs. Jumping spiders don't have special leg muscles, like grasshoppers, to help them jump.

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Instead, they propel themselves by suddenly changing the blood flow in their body. The jumping spider contracts special muscles to increase the flow of blood to its legs. This makes the legs fully extended and sends the spider flying.

Spiders often face an unfortunate fate of being casually killed by humans. However, treating spiders as disposable nuisances is detrimental to us and the environment. Research suggests that 400 to 800 million tonnes of insects are killed by spiders each year. Indeed, spiders play a significant global role in terrestrial food webs. Further, a spider in your home is likely playing a vital role in keeping your space pest-free, so leave them be. If you cannot face the thought of sharing your home with spiders, consider a gentle catch-and-release technique.

Spiders are more beneficial to us alive than dead. So next time, stop and think before you casually kill a spider. And if you really cannot stand spiders, I suggest you move to Antarctica.





**Graeme Mitchley** 

### **Thank you Graeme!**

n our July 2020 magazine, we featured WildlifeCampus student Graeme Mitchley. Graeme has been a WildlifeCampus student since 2017 and completed our Field Guiding/Game Ranging course.

Graeme and his wife Angela both enjoy taking time to pursue his hobby, photographing wildlife. Graeme is completely hooked and goes to the Kruger whenever he can trying to sharpen his photography skills each time he visits.

### Want to be featured?

We would love to hear your story! Please let us know how the WildlifeCampus courses influenced your life! info@wildlifecampus.com

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In 2015, in conjunction with his passion for photography, he started a Facebook page (Graeme Mitchley – Wildlife Photographer) to showcase his photographs to nature enthusiasts all over the world.

Graeme's special love is rhinos. He has been involved in rhino conservation for many years as it breaks his heart to think that rhinos might not be around for much longer. Raising funds and creating awareness has been his primary focus, while getting a tremendous amount of support from family, colleagues, friends, learners and especially the Hurlyvale community.

In this edition, WildlifeCampus would like to thank Graeme for his wonderful photographic contribution towards our Field guiding/Game ranging course.

From his many trips to Kruger National Park, Graeme has gathered an extensive library of different animals in various habitats displaying their most natural behaviours.

Thank you Graeme! We look forward to our students seeing your incredible work throughout the course.

To try the free component of our recently updated Field Guiding/Game Ranging course, <u>CLICK HERE</u>.







#### Some of Graeme's amazing pictures.

For more pictures and videos, follow <u>Graeme Mitchley – Wildlife Photographer</u> and <u>Celebrating Rhinos</u> (clicking links will take you to the Facebook pages).





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**Employment** 

By Hailey Cooper, CEO of **Wild Dreams Hospitality** 

### How to prepare for your job search?

would share a few tips to help you on this journey by answering a few questions you may have.



#### WHAT DO I NEED IF I WANT TO APPI JOB?

Most important will be your CV - this you are using to "sell" yourself to a employer!

It's also a good idea to have the below documents and information ready applying for a job:

- · A cell phone so that compar contact you. If you can, inve smartphone so that you can g and WhatsApp.
- An email address.
- Copies of any certificates.
  - Photo of you.
- Copy of ID book or Passport with stamped (If you aren't from SA).
- Reference letters.
- Food portfolio if applying for position.
- It would also be beneficial to ha such as Zoom and Skype, employers will want to do interv one of these means, and they different preferences to which or

#### HOW MANY PAGES SHOULD MY CV B

Ideally, 2 pages but no more than doesn't include certificates or letters).

#### **DO'S AND DON'TS OF CV WRITING**

- Do not put a fancy border or bac on your CV. This is distracting.
- No different colours. Again, distracting and can come across unprofessional. White backgrou black ink only.

# Looking for a job can be a job itself, so we thought we

PLY FOR A	•	The font must be all the same and a font that can be read easily like the following fonts available on WORD: Calibri, Bell MT,
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potential	•	Font size is important, don't go too big or
		too small (12-14 is good, and headings
···· :• · · · · /		can be 16-18).
ow items/	•	No random clip-art images on the CV.
ly before	•	Do keep it short and to the point.
	•	If you left a place of employment due to a
		negative reason such as: you didn't get on
anies can		with a colleague, do not put this on your
vest in a		CV. Even if the colleague was the problem,
get email		it may not come across this way on paper.
		It is better to explain this to an employer
		in person if the information is required.
	•	Do make sure your CV is up to date,
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r a Chefs		all places of employment are listed even if
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as many	•	Your main duties can be listed under your
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		duties from one job to another. Keep
BE?		duties brief and relevant.
an 3 (this	WH	AT SHOULD MY PHOTO BE LIKE?
reference		
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		'professional' looking as possible.
		It should be in colour; black and white
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ckground		It should be head and shoulders, not full
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ss as a bit	•	You should be smiling and looking happy
ound with		in the photo.

No drinks, cigarettes in the photo. ٠



- No other people or animals in the photo, only you.
- No sunglasses or caps.
- Hair should be neat and tidy.
- Not a selfie. .
- Ask someone you know with a camera to take a photo of you and email it to you if you don't have a camera. Photos taken with cameras are of better quality than phones or use a good quality phone.

#### WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is basically motivation for why a company should consider employing you, but this needs to be kept very brief. Sometimes people will do this as a separate letter to their CV; however, the less paperwork, the better, so I suggest you do the cover paragraph as part of your CV. This would be at the beginning of the CV and include your experience, passion and enthusiasm for employment with the company. I prefer to call this a 'cover paragraph'

It's important to keep it relevant to the job that you are applying for. Ideally, it should be edited for every single job and include the job title you are applying for.

Don't copy and paste your work experience in this paragraph. This will already be included under your work experience section.

#### I'M APPLYING FOR A CHEF'S POSITION, WHAT IS A FOOD **PORTFOLIO?**

A food portfolio is photos of dishes you have cooked and plated. These should be dishes you are very proud of and, most importantly, look amazing as they are photos showing your skills. You should try to include at least 2 x starters, 2 x main courses and 2 x desserts to showcase your range of Contact Hayley on talent for cooking and presenting dishes. If you would like to send more photos you can, but this is the minimum amount you should be submitting.

If you are applying for a pastry chef role, you can stick to photos that are relevant.

#### WHAT IS A WRITTEN REFERENCE?

Before leaving any employer, you should request a written reference from your supervisor/manager. This letter should be on the company letterhead, with the person who is writing the reference's name and position and include all contact details and be signed by them.

The letter should include your role with the company/job title, a basic overview of your duties and how you performed. It may include your strengths but also your weaknesses. It's really up to the employer what they write here, but it's information on how you performed in your role and if they recommend you.

Remember, the more reference letters you get, the better, so ask for one from every employer.

It is important to note that a written reference is different to a certificate of service which would only state your name, ID number, the dates you worked for the company, in what role and sometimes it includes your salary amount and reason you left. A certificate of service doesn't include any information on your duties or how you performed in this role and isn't worth submitting with a job application.

Now that you have your documents in place and your up-todate CV, you need to find places to send your CV to!

#### For more info:

hayley@wilddreams.co.za OR www.wilddreams.co.za

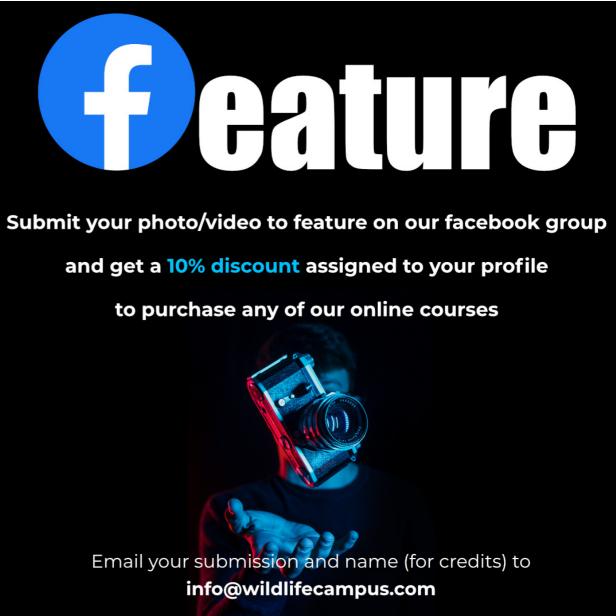


# WildlifeCampus Facebook group

The WildlifeCampus Facebook group has been a daily form of interaction with our students for almost 14 years! Share your pictures, videos and experiences with other WildlifeCampus students and wildlife enthusiasts from all over the world!

#### To join our Facebook, group click the picture below.

**Remember:** In order to get a 10% discount assigned to your profile your group submission should be submitted by email to info@wildlifecampus.com





# Celebrating 4 years of partnership

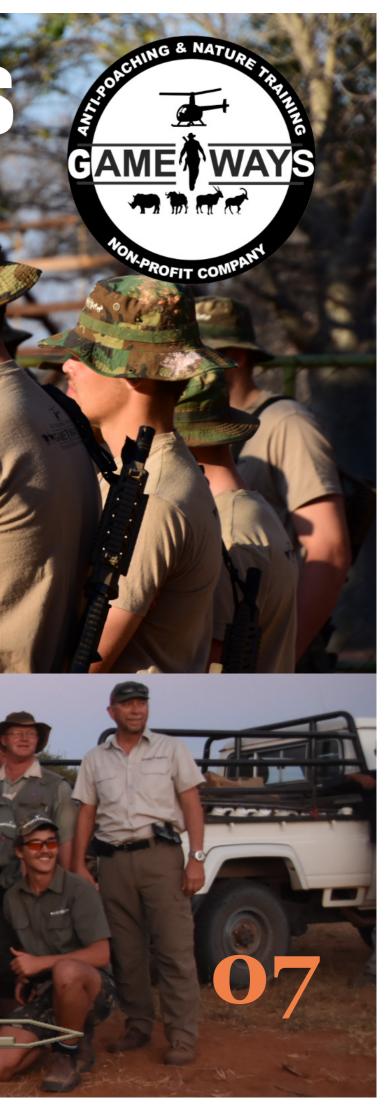
Since 2018, we have welcomed many Gameways students, who have found that the WildlifeCampus online theory courses greatly enhanced their practical training experience with Gameways.

WildlifeCampus would like to sincerely thank the Gameways staff for the remarkable collaboration. We look forward to many more years of synergetic training!

Watch our collaborative YouTube video HERE.



Wildlife Campus



### **Time to say** goodbye...

#### **By David Batzofin**



• first met Todd more than 20 years ago when I was working at a wildlife radio station housed in a ► complex not too far from where Todd's WildlifeCampus offices were at that time.

It seemed that our mutual love of wildlife brought us together and we would spend time chatting about nature and the courses that WildlifeCampus was offering at that stage.

I have always wanted to be a field guide and Todd suggested that I do their online course to prepare myself for the practicals that would be done at a lodge that he worked with.

Naively I enquired how long the course would take to complete; "About a year" was his optimistic answer!



He could not have been more wrong if he tried... 20 years later I still have not completed it. I think that I celebrate the 21st anniversary of non-completion this year. It became a standing joke between Todd and me.

So much so that when I enrolled for the game lodge management course several years later and asked him the same question, his response was... "probably decades".

However, I surprised both of us by finishing this course in 3 months with a distinction.

We kept in touch during COVID and in August 2020, after much cajoling from me, I got Todd to an interview with me for my YouTube channel. Click here for the interview.

In a WhatsApp text in December 2021, we exchanged the usual end-of-year greetings and he responded by saying "look out for the braai invite". It never came and when I contacted him in January to ask about the missing invite, he said that it had had to be postponed due to COVID. And that was to be our last communication.

I was at a training provider in the bush with no cell signal on Friday, 21 January but as I left their property every platform on my phone buzzed and beeped with frantic calls from Jonathan Acx.

Having mentioned to Jonathan a rather explicit article that I wanted to submit for the March issue of the WildlifeCampus magazine, I thought that he was about to ask me to perhaps reconsider what I was going to submit.

I could hear from his voice that the situation was a lot worse and I am glad that I had pulled to the side of the road when he uttered the words "Todd died in his sleep this morning". It was so unexpected as just before taking the call I was about to send Todd a message.

How does one process news that is so unexpected? I had to drive back from Hoedspruit all alone while trying to wrap my head around that terrible information.

Several days have now passed and I can only imagine what the Kaplan family as well as his friends and colleagues are experiencing. Reading the tributes on the WildlifeCampus Facebook page reinforces what a legend he was within the industry and how highly he

was regarded by those who came in contact with him. I currently vacillate between acceptance and denial:

#### "There is light even in the darkest corners, our eyes just need time to become accustomed to the dark".

To the immediate family, I wish you all long life and to his friends and colleagues, I wish you the strength to continue with the work that he started and to make certain that his legacy will inspire many for years to come.

Shalom Todd, you will be sorely missed.



"The few times I met Todd I felt he was a confident and kindhearted person. Nothing ever seemed too big or too small for him to handle. He offered me a job and an opportunity which I am extremely grateful for!

Thank you Todd, we will miss you!"

Maggel Els, Academic Course Coordinator, WildlifeCampus

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