

Nyari NEWS

January 2015



Little Sparrowhawk born & raised in Nyari

Photo Courtesy of: Dr Neal Aggarwal



Greater Egret

Photo Courtesy of: Dr Neal Aggarwal

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A new look newsletter

Welcome to a new look newsletter. We've decided to give it a try and see if there will be more readers if we have a more fancy document and also to try and drive our members towards our Facebook pages and our website.

This newsletter is produced by the NRWS ICT Department and includes content from our meetings and deliberations in the main committee as well as from various parts of the internet. We are inviting any members who would like to see something published in this newsletter to type out such items and send them to dr.neal.aggarwal@gmail.com for consideration and inclusion in upcoming newsletters. If you send photographs/images please make sure that you hold the rights to these and state the name you'd like to see appear when we caption and attribute them to you.

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(Dr Neal Aggarwal - Head ICT, NRWS)



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Estate finances are in good shape. Reserves currently stand at enough to give us a six month breathing period if we were to lose all income. More importantly these reserves serve to cushion all our members against a catastrophe made made or of natures doing

Estate Finances

Estate finances are in good shape and we have reserves to enable the estate to run for at least six months if all payments were suddenly to stop. That is why we maintain a reserve. The money we have in reserve is held in a fixed deposit, which, even though we have to pay taxes on it's gains, grows and keeps members' money working while it sits in reserve.

We are looking at beefing up the guards co-operative holdings with a view to being able to help them sort out legal cases, like the one we

recently had to help them fight, out of their own funds should the need arise. The Co-op holdings at present only amount to approximately KSh. 170,000. Any court case would of course consume much more than that.

Kirit Shah and Geoffrey Naituli continue to maintain the accounts in exemplary condition with our office manager Karanja entering the data into our accounting system. Within a few months we will once again be sending off these figures to our auditors to have them look over our

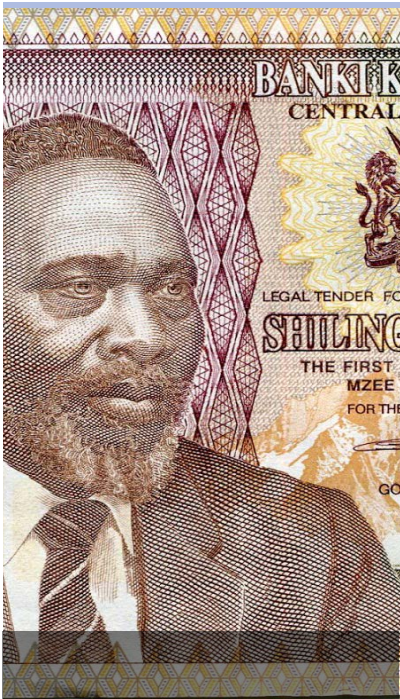


handywork to approve it for final presentation at the Annual General Meeting and then to adopt it into the running of NRWS.

There are still a few members who freebie off the goodwill of others and we ask that you don't to this but do bring your dues up to current. If you are a resident that knows of such members we request that you approach them and let them know that the security we enjoy in Nyari (Nyari is considered the safest estate to live in in Nairobi), the street lighting, the internet access, the roads, the environment and much, much more all comes about as a result of the harambee effort of all members whose contributions are put to good effect through the committee.

Nyari subs are among the lowest of all resident associations in Nairobi North. Other estates tie their dues to water supply provision and 'force' their members to pay up that way. We do no such thing. Our members contribute to Nyari in the spirit of voluntary self governance. The Government is not going to provide the essentials that we need to live a good, comfortable life. We have to do it for ourselves. And we like it that way. In 'the West' rates are upwards of \$10,000 per annum yet we can provide comparable services for less than \$70 a month!

Please do pay up and help us keep Nyari healthy.



Finances at a glance

What we need money for:

- 1 PRIMARY USE is security. 34 guards wages, radio network, police post, emergency response vehicle
- 2 MAINTENANCE - repairing roads, replacing light posts and light fittings, cleaning drains, paint the police posts, auditing etc
- 3 IMPROVING THE ESTATE - tree planting, installing gates and barriers, numbering houses, installing CCTV.
- 4 DEALING WITH LEGAL ISSUES - land disputes, court cases, stopping illegal constructions

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Environmental Matters

The Chairman, Mr Ghassmi, who lives at the top end of the lake where there is a small lake that feeds into the main lake has reported that he has removed close to two lorry loads worth of silt that has been trickling into the small lake over the

past 15 years since he moved into Nyari. He has continually removed this silt and worries that if not removed the small lake will disappear completely once it fills up.

The small lake is an integral part of the Nyari Lakes ecosystem. Wetlands are

now understood to be crucial parts of our environment that must be looked after with maximum vigilance. In the past we have had to fend off developers that wanted to drain the main Nyari lake to make way for apartments and

Our lakes -- yes there's more than one -- need very careful attention and eternal vigilance. The slightest slip and we'll have a Nairobi Dam catastrophe right here in Nyari. Nairobi Dam is now completely covered with water hyacinth to the extent that you can walk across the dam without sinking in at all! The image at right is a recent photograph of Nairobi Dam. This [Death of Nairobi Dam](#) blog post is truly scary.

more recently when a developer downstream of the lake built almost on top of the outflow river. Nyari has a title deed for the main lake that is held by a group of Nyari appointed trustees the entire Nyari membership being entrusted, through it's various committees, to

look after the resource. In other parts of the country, and based on the latest laws, there is a mandatory 250m zone that must be left between a lake or river margin and any developments. There is also a nationwide requirement for a leave of 1Km between these margins and any

roads. Of course this it not possible in the case of man made dams like the Nyari lake which were zoned and developed many decades ago. Indeed all the houses on the main lake have their beacons below water level so the question of creating a 'leave' is laughable the leave being beyond the



Hyacinth choking Nairobi Dam
Public Domain Photo



Hyacinth choking a lake in Japan

Public Domain Photo



SECOND rows of houses on any of the Nyari lakes. Also most of the lakeside construction was effected well before the new laws came into force and they are not retrospective as this would mean demolishing hundreds of homes and destroying many neighbourhoods. The security risks alone mean we cannot allow public access to residential water bodies. Remember how Dr Aggarwal was shot and left for dead in his house in 1999? Those thugs came from the water side of his property which was not fenced at the time his being one of the few houses in Nyari then. Today the country as a whole is governed by these new laws and construction around lakes not permitted without a leave of 250m. But this does not mean that we can rest and not look after the resources to our utmost. We are crushing our environment all around us all over this planet. It behooves us to look after this estate to our very best, if not for us then at least for those generations that come after us.

How could we 'lose' the lakes? Actually - it could happen very easily. Here are some example scenarios. Let's say a house starts to discharge effluent (it's overflowing septic tank) into the lake. Within a few days to weeks the water in the lake will become [enriched with nutrients](#) from the decay of the effluent that will be building up in the water. That nutrient rich medium will then support algal blooms. Those blooms in turn will

place demands on the water oxygen and other levels. Starvation of oxygen will occur which will lead to death of other organisms such as the millions of microbes, crustaceans and the hundreds of fish, crayfish, snails and crabs that lived together in harmony while the rich medium was held in check. The 'death' of the water would then lead to putrefication -- rotting. The lake would become smelly, develop strange colours and this might even progress to a putrid water source that no one can live near. There is the possibility that the area could be declared unsuitable for human habitation, made into a disaster zone and all of us forced to leave to live elsewhere. Has this happened before elsewhere?

Here is another scenario that has unfolded right here in Nairobi: Imagine a well-intentioned person bringing in a nice looking floating plant with lovely small purple flowers, from his weekend holiday in Lake Naivasha. The plant - [water hyacinth](#). Hyacinth grows, like all living systems, on an [exponentially](#) described curve. What does this mean? Bear with me -- a little simple math is needed here for you to really, really appreciate what exponential growth is. Suppose you have one shilling and it's Monday morning. Now advance the time to Tuesday and double what you have. That means you now have TWO shillings. Again advance the time to Wednesday and double what you have -- FOUR shillings. Thursday, EIGHT shillings and so on. Now before you look at the answer on the next line stop and think and answer this ... when do you think you'll have ONE THOUSAND (1,000) shillings?

Most people are shocked by the answer ... NEXT WEEK WEDNESDAY!

Yes that's correct - go try it out for yourself. 8 - Thursday, 16 - Friday, 32 - Saturday, 64 - Sunday, 128 - Monday, 256 - Tuesday, 512 Wednesday, 1024 - Thursday. So sometime on Wednesday you passed the 1000 mark!

That's what happens with [exponential growth](#) and water hyacinth follows almost exactly that same progression doubling it's mass every 24 hours. Carry on the progression and in 30 days, starting with just ONE single plant on day ONE, you have -- wait for it -- 1 BILLION plants! So in one month our lake would be overrun. This happened to Nairobi Dam (near Wilson Airport) and we've never been able to recover from this. That is what, coupled with

sewerage being dumped into the dam from the slum dwellers on the margins, made the hyacinth grow even faster. Today you can drive your car over the dam and even walk over it easily. So could this happen to our dams? Ofcourse it can. Let's think about this carefully and renew our vigilance every day that we live close to such beautiful water bodies.

Clearing a path through water hyacinth.
Lake Victoria, May 2014



Nyari Fun Day



A Picture Gallery

More pictures can be downloaded from:
[Facebook](#)

Gathering

The Social Subcommittee is busy working on a venue for the Nyari party. They envisage a February or March date for the party and that it will be held at a hotel or restaurant to ease the logistics of holding such a gathering. To date Zen Gardens has made an offer of KSh. 3,500/- per person with a cash bar. This seems a little high and alternatives are being sought in the 2,000/- range. We are expecting 80 members to attend this party and it will be a great time to get together and make acquaintance of your neighbours. These social get-togethers are an important facet of living in Nyari and we hope that you will all make an effort to attend.

Maintenance

The road repair that you've been watching over the past weeks has brought many of our roads back to past glory. 1.5 million shillings was spent in the extensive repairs which are as yet to be completed. To complete we're going to need another million shillings. Members were very kind in making an extra donation, by way of a road levy of KSh. 10,000/-. To complete we are going to need an additional million shillings (there's the major part of Ibis Drive still to be done). **do we mention who - I think I heard a name mentioned in the meeting - Pamina? - provided the road repair at cost?

Surprisingly and a little dissappointingly some members approached our office manager offering to make their 10k contribution payment on condition that their personal slip roads to their houses be completed first before the main thoroughfares. The case in point is a road that comes off the main Ibis Drive up near Barrier 2. That road is about 250m long. To tarmac that road in total will cost upwards of 2 million shillings for that road alone! Now as that is not a road coming off the main estate roads we can't expect to be able to carpet that surface.

On a happier note, a member cabro tiled her entire slip road at her own cost. She then asked if the Nyari Committee would facilitate the fitting and wiring of street lights on that road. This is the sort of member we want to help. She paid close to 2 million shillings to tile her slip road and we feel that it is then justified that the committee spend Ksh 30,000/- to fit three lamp posts, the lights and their wiring and to get it all connected up to City Council power. As we are the ones with the power and mandate to liaise with the City Council on this we are the right people to approach and when we have a member so willing to improve the estate for all of us like this, through her own pocket, we are happy to add our bit to the project. We need more members to come forward with such projects. Please consider what you can do for your estate.

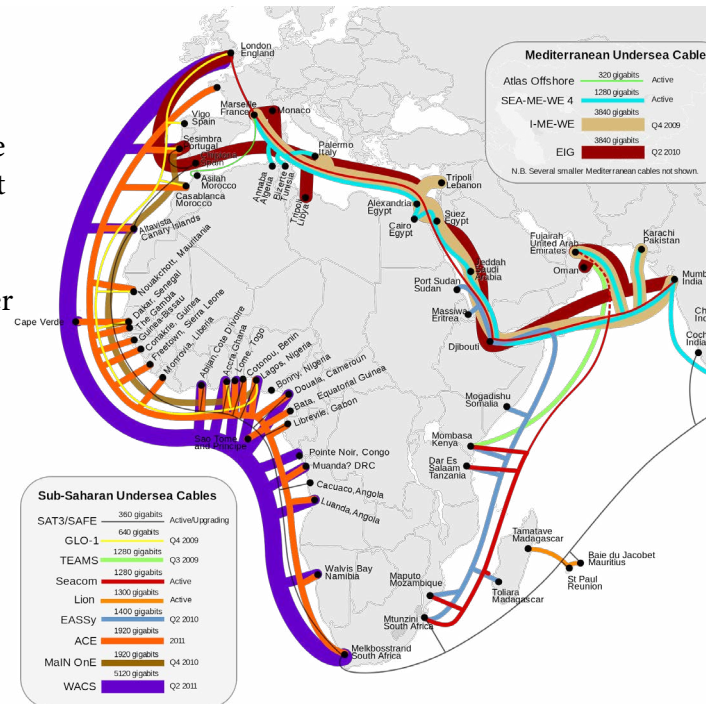


ICT

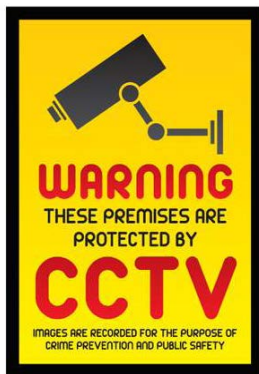
Internet Access in Nyari

Jamii Telecom (JTL) continues to impress. In terms of raw speed no one else seems to be able to beat them. Zuku impresses in their triple pay offer and if you need telephony and television then currently Zuku's offering is better than JTL's. However we have had many reports from members complaining about Zuku speeds dropping off at peak hours which seem to be the evenings from 5pm to 10pm - a time when many want to relax and surf the internet or to answer their personal emails.

For some triple play is not a necessity, raw internet speeds being more important. Several families only watch YouTube videos for their entertainment while others want the raw speed for their work. There are software developers residing within Nyari for whom 10MBps is critically important. These users appreciate JTL's dedicated individual account service. JTL speeds do not drop no matter what time of day it is and are truly as advertised -- a 10MBps line gives you 10MBps in both directions up and down.



CCTV



To date our security oriented CCTV network has been on the internet system that JTL setup across Nyari. This was done so as to have access to the cameras given to certain members to monitor in their spare time. To date it does not appear that the members given this access are able to do much monitoring. There is a monthly charge for this service as it is connected to the internet through JTL. It has been decided that considering the lack of usage of the monitoring facility as well as the monthly charge it would be more prudent to switch to a dedicated CCTV system based on a fibreoptic cable laid specially for this. This will necessitate a one-off payment to the installer for the purchase of the fibre and the labour required to install it. Once this is done there will be no recurring monthly expense.

Nyari on the net

Did you know we have Nyari Facebook, Twitter and Wordpress blog pages which you can find by clicking on the links below right. The Facebook page sees a lot of activity as all our members postings also appear on it. This gives you a way to see what your fellow Nyari members are up to and to figure out if there might be synergies between you and them. The internet is such a rich place today that you really MUST make full use of it. Now that we have high speed internet access in Nyari (via Zuku and JTL) you can access this tremendously rich source of information any time day or night.



Did you know that we have full time, degree level students in Nyari that are studying for their US, Swiss and UK degrees?

find out more from [Acacia Aggarwal](#)

Member Profile

Acacia Aggarwal - A Taekwondo Champion

Date of Birth: July 25th, 1993.

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Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/acacia.aggarwal>

Acacia first began learning Taekwondo when she was in Kindergarten at the age of 5. She is now 19 years old and in her final year of university. She is currently working through a Bachelors in Business Administration at SMC University, Geneva and taking a variety of Information and Communication Technology courses at Stanford University, California. Both are fully online.

Over the years, she has competed in fifteen Taekwondo championships winning 8 Gold Medals, 5 Silver Medals and 2 Bronze Medals. She has fought in three national tournaments including:

Kenya Schools National Taekwondo Championship 2008 held at Moi International Sports Center Kasarani where she won a gold medal.

Montessori Taekwondo Championship 2012 where she won a silver medal.

Kenya Open Taekwondo Championship 2012 at Shauri Moyo where she won a gold medal. Her winning the gold at the Kenya Open Championship in December 2012, caused her to be selected as the Kenya National Team representative in the finweight category.

In the East African International Taekwondo Championship 2013 held in Kigali, Rwanda she won a silver medal for Kenya.

List of other gold medal awards:

Banda School Taekwondo Tournament 2003 - 10 years old

1st Edition Brookhouse Taekwondo Tournament 2005 - 11 years old

2nd Premier Tae Kwon Do Championship 2005 - 12 years old

Centennial Junior Taekwondo Championship 2006 (Parklands Sports Club) - 13 years old

Kenya Schools National Taekwondo Championship 2008 - 30-40kgs weight category

4th Edition Premier Taekwondo Championships 2008 - 14 years old

5th Edition Premier Taekwondo Championships 2009 - 15 years old

1st Edition Kianda Taekwondo Girls Tournament 2011 - 17 years old

1st Montessori Learning Center Taekwondo Open Championship 2012 - Seniors Category

2nd Edition Kianda Taekwondo Girls Tournament 2012 - Under 18 years category

Kenya Open Taekwondo Championship 2012 - Seniors Category

East African Taekwondo Championship 2013, Rwanda - Seniors Category

Upcoming tournaments in 2013 that Acacia intends competing in include

The Kianda Girls Taekwondo Tournament (March)

The Chairman's Cup National Team Championship (March)

The Inter-Counties Championships (May)

The Madaraka Day Club Championships (June)

The National Secondary Schools Club Championships (July)

The Kenya Open International Championships (December)

Training Record (latter stages only):

Acacia received her 1st Kyu Red Belt (Pre-black) in December 2011

Black Belt - November 2011 and her Black Belt 1st Dan in April 2013.

Acacia scores a kick to the head - Kenya Open 2013



Kenya scoops the medals in Rwanda



Acacia is now a prominent coach coaching Nyari kids too!



Staff Profile

Phinas Karanja - A Stalwart Pillar of Nyari



PLACEHOLDER IMAGE
need image of Karanja

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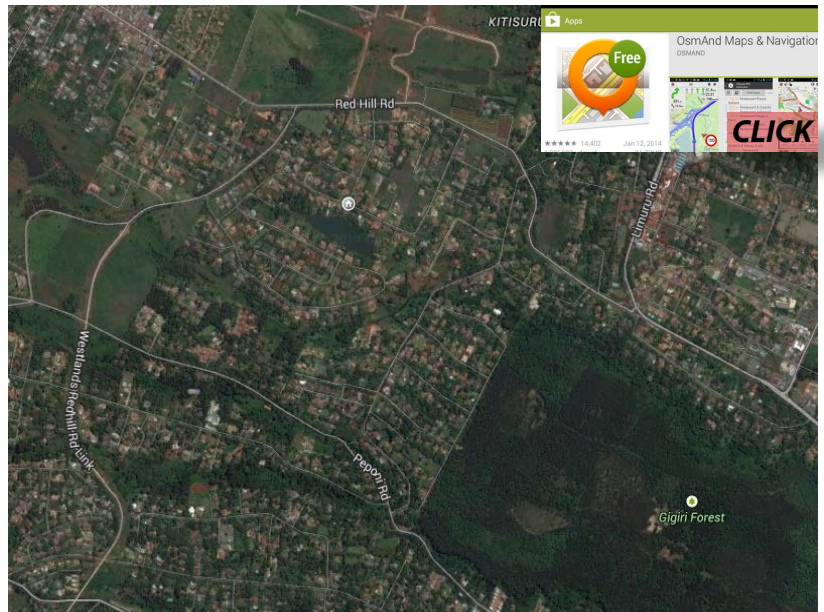
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Fun Stuff

Several years ago [our resident GIS expert, Dr Aggarwal, mapped](#) out Nyari using a hand-held GPS receiver and walking all the roads carefully and painstakingly marking all the interesting waypoints. Today that map is available for free (as are all his National Park maps) on [Open Street Map](#).

It's great fun to download these onto your smartphone and then go for a walk in Nyari and see how the icon on your phone shows exactly where you are at all times. Dr Aggarwal recommends the free Android App OSMAND+ which you can get from the [Google Play store](#) or [MotionX](#) which you can get for the iPhone from the iTunes store (\$0.99).



If enough of you do this maybe we can try some geocaching games within Nyari?

Member Project

Ami & Neal Aggarwal converted their chiminea heater into a rocket mass heater. Their [photographs are on facebook](#). This heater now burns all evening on a small load of deadfall twigs and some dry bamboo. The Aggarwals have never bought any firewood in 19 years of living on their acre plot in Nyari. They have 26 acacia trees on their plot and those trees have supplied ALL the firewood all through the cold months in Nyari. Temperatures in Nyari can get down into the 9 or 10°C region so this heater is much loved. The mass of concrete was designed to hold as much heat as possible. It's actual mass is about 80Kg and after the fire goes out that mass can keep all around it cozy for 4 to 5 hours!



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