Dearest Gentle Readers aka Laager VIIII,

With the dawn of a new year came the eagerly anticipated return of **Laager IX**, a gathering that—true to form—wasted no time in asserting its presence upon Society.

A select group of particularly determined souls arrived as early as Wednesday, boldly pitching camp whilst braving the infamous **GQ gale-force winds**. Such fortitude must be commended, for all emerged alive, windswept, and eager to recount their heroic survival.

Wednesday evening brought an unexpected yet thoroughly delightful diversion, as the esteemed **John family** hosted a **music trivia soirée** in honour of their commemorative event. Though held outside the normal confines of time and propriety (a most daring manoeuvre), the gamble proved worthwhile, earning both applause and admiration from those fortunate enough to attend.

By Friday, the familiar figures of the Laager began to assemble, ready to embark upon the weekend's affairs. **Uncle Dudley and Lydia** distinguished themselves immediately by being the first to arrive, thereby securing the ever-coveted **Woody Award**—a triumph few forget, and none escape teasing for.

Not all entries were perfectly timed, however. Our esteemed **Fire Master** arrived decidedly late to his own fire, though swiftly redeemed himself by transporting what appeared to be **half of a national forest's supply of firewood**, ensuring the Laager would burn bright throughout the weekend.

Alas, calamity soon struck. Thanks to the ongoing attentions (or lack thereof) of our beloved local municipality, **GQ** suffered a most inconvenient catastrophe—leaving Society without **power, water, or cellular reception**. Civilization, it seemed, had briefly abandoned us.

Enter **Sir Charl**, whose timely arrival bearing a generator quite literally illuminated the gathering. Not content with mere electricity, he even produced a **great smoke signal**, summoning lost campers back to the grounds. In true SA fashion, an array of "creative" and *entirely unofficial* power connections soon followed, ensuring that every fridge remained valiantly operational.

A most enthusiastic thank you must once again be extended to Charl—**a legend among men**.

Yet whispers suggest that Charl's recent time spent in the **United States** has unexpectedly altered the gentleman. For not only did he **braai his own meat** (compose yourselves, dear readers), but he was also observed preparing a **Michelin-Star-quality breakfast for one** on Saturday morning, whilst Lady Lisa was regrettably unwell at home.

Ever alert to the dangers of discovery, Sir Charl expertly concealed all evidence before Lady Lisa's arrival at camp, greeting her instead with the modest offerings of **Sunlight soap and a dish sponge**. A brave—and possibly foolhardy—gesture, sir. Society holds its breath.

As if municipal betrayal were not enough—having already thrust the Laager into the Dark Ages courtesy of the **NMBM**—the heavens conspired further. In true GQ fashion, campers were

subjected to **scorching and entirely unrelenting heat**, testing resolve, patience, and deodorant reserves alike.

Salvation arrived in frozen form, as the ever-resourceful **committee** sold ice creams both to cool overheated spirits and bolster club coffers. A noble endeavour, applauded by all.

Saturday afternoon unveiled the illustrious **Willows Classic Mini Golf Tournament**, attracting a record-breaking number of competitors. Society was particularly impressed to see **Linka back in action**, cleverly disguised as *Gamieda Abdulla—the golfing ninja*. A masterstroke of inclusion and deception.

The coveted trophy was claimed by **Kevin**, whose impressive skill could not save him from victory—despite his obvious attempts to avoid such fate. **Karma, it seems, has a delightful sense of humour.**

Meanwhile, **Sir Stefan**, braving sun and stamina alike, cast his line and emerged triumphant with a keeper fish. The creature was spared supper and instead rehomed in an aquarium, earning Stefan the prestigious **Fishing Trophy** and the admiration of Society.

As evening descended, the **Gourmet Burger Competition** took centre stage. Many worthy creations were presented, yet the title ultimately fell to our esteemed **Fire Master, Dustin**, whose **cheesy Guinness masterpiece** secured him top honours and culinary acclaim.

On Saturday, the **Fire Master** seemed to have mysteriously gone missing in action, but in reality, he had been summonsed away for an urgent appointment with the **Water Closet.**

When he **finally returned** to the campsite, not a single soul was in sight, and the fire had been thoroughly snuffed out. It appeared the campers had partied hard enough the night before and wisely decided to retreat to their vans, maybe they were afraid that the **Fire Master was aiming to** burning the rest of the forest he had thoughtfully brought along…

Sunday dawned slowly—fatigue and heat refusing to release their grip. The committee, ever dutiful, prepared **bacon-and-egg jaffles**, restoring energy and goodwill among the ranks.

Justice, as always, was served.

Shanana, standing tall at twelve with **Kevin**, who took on the role of *Jakkals*, delivering judgement for the weekend's many transgressions. *(Blah, blah, blah—yes Sonja, we see you 👀).*

The honours were thus bestowed:

- **Ursula** received the formidable **Moerstok, reminder, kettle vs generator is a no no..**
- **Charl** was handed the **Spanner**, in recognition of his heroic generator smoke-screening
- **The Warwicks** received the **Spoon**, for their enduring generosity behind the scenes

And so, dear reader, despite oppressive heat, infrastructural neglect, and scandalous displays of independence in the kitchen, **a splendid weekend was enjoyed by all**.

Society now turns its eager gaze toward **Jeffrey's Bay for the "love" month**, where no doubt fresh tales of triumph, mischief, and questionable decisions shall unfold once more.

Until then—
Safe trekking and do behave…