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FRONT COVER/VOORBLAD —

Kareeblare/Karee leaves (*Rhus lancea*)  
by/deur A. van Eeden

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EDITORIAL

A museum is often compared with an university as both have as objective to educate and to research. However, as James Potter, director of the Commonwealth Institute points out, unlike universities where access to knowledge is limited either by lack of financial resources or failure to achieve arbitrary standards; the joy of the museum, which it shares with parks and libraries, is that it is open, is accessible and belongs to everyone. There are no age, qualification or special knowledge restrictions.

The museum is not restricted to its premises, nor its message to a selected few. The museum attempts to reach everyone. The museum is there to communicate the cultural and natural heritage and contemporary life that belongs to everyone.

Having said this, one hastens to ask, why then does such a large section of the community (particularly adults) fail to make more use of museums? Immediately I hear remarks such as: museums exhibit "dead" things; a museum is a

place to visit only when you have nothing else to do; museums equate with adjectives such as musty, old-fashioned, moth-eaten etc.

Let me correct these statements by the following rhetorical questions of which there are many more: where else can one observe, three-dimensionally, an organism which lived 3 400 million years ago or come within arm's reach of a fully grown African elephant or see at close quarters a tranquil scene of a nocturnal (and rare) animal, such as a Brown hyaena in its natural environment or admire an endangered species such as an Aye-aye or walk down a "street" and peek into rooms and shops which "ouma" and "oupa" walked and frequented when they were young? Where else can you, three-dimensionally, see and have explained to you, how man possibly evolved? Where else can you communicate, under one roof, with an Arcarologist, Archaeologist, Artist or an Entomologist, Ethnologist or a Herpetologist, Historian or a Palaeontologist, Ornithologist, Botanist or Mammalogist?



C.D. LYNCH