

YOUR SMS COMMENTS

On Zapiro's cartoon:

● CONGRATULATIONS to The Times and Zapiro on a fabulous cartoon (yesterday). Simple, yet so meaningful. Long may the showerhead remain. — RCS

On 'DA youth poster reckless':

● LUKHONA Mnguni seems obsessed with race in his letter. He should read Jonathan Jansen's column and try to learn from it. — Janet, Jhb

On 'Witness blocks inquiry':

● SAM Buthelezi must be jailed and left to rot. Who does he think he is, suspected of embezzling millions in pension money and then refusing to testify? — Anon

On 'Waterwise, and sage for security':

● THIS article promotes the worst kind of selfishness and, if the by-laws haven't changed, illegal encroachment on public footways. Pavements are not our personal property. 99.9% of people walking by are simply trying to get from A to B, and we have no right — morally or legally — to force them to walk in the road. — Kathy Sham

On 'Joburg budget threat':

● WHY am I still waiting for my December 2011 account from the municipality? I want to pay it, but I do not know how much to pay. The call centre does not give the readings used. — J Kriel, Jozi

On 'Mazibuko slams irresponsible ministers':

● MINISTERS should be committed, punctual, honourable and of high integrity. Some lack all of the above. How did they become ministers in the first place? — SuiGeneris

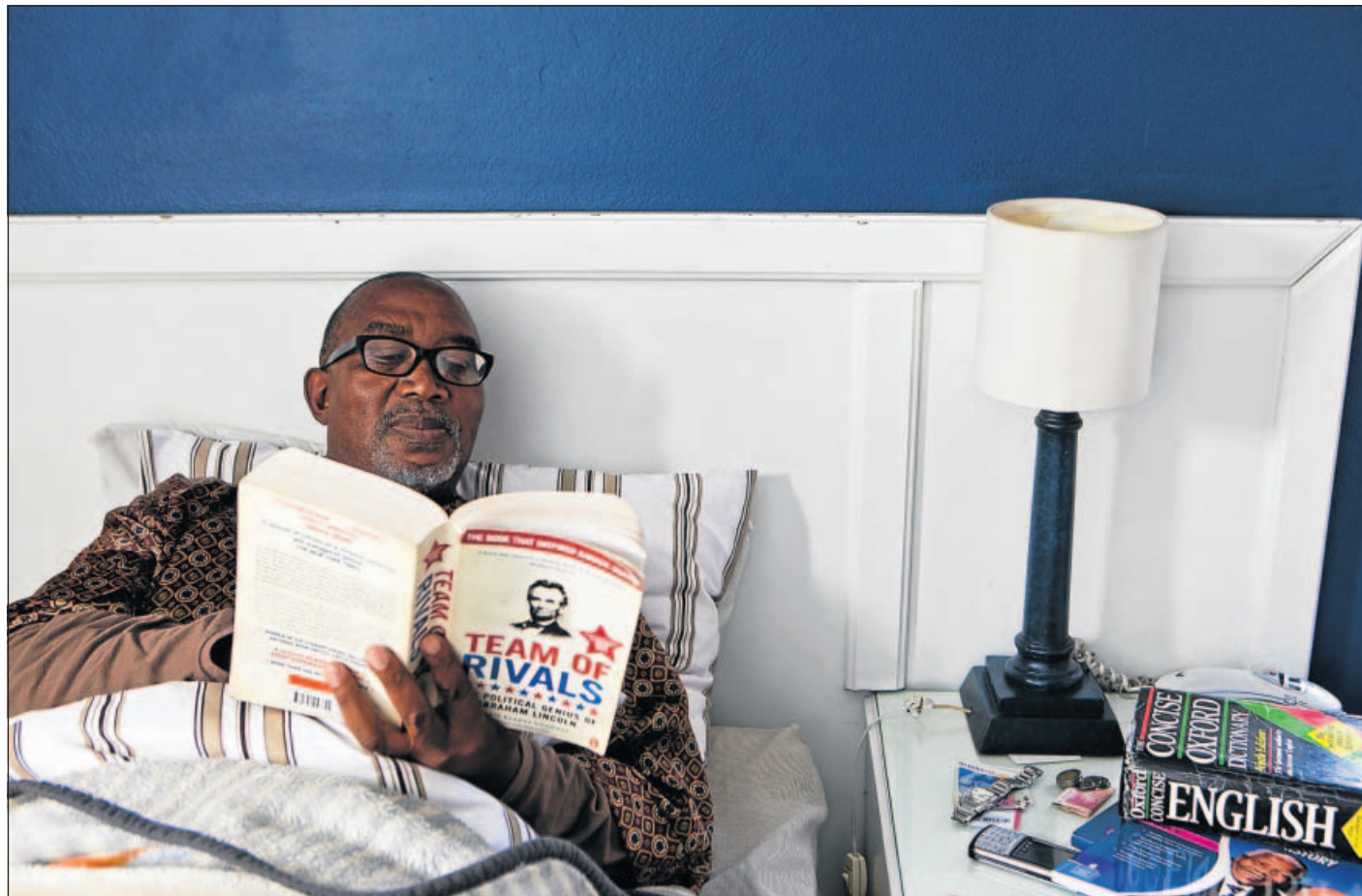
On 'iPads for elite schools':

● THE fact is an iPad will never come close to a good teacher who is well paid and motivated even if they have only a blackboard and chalk. — Mike123

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Sipho goes to school

Tackling matric at the age of 60 takes courage, but the musician of 'Burn Out' fame is determined to achieve his dream, writes **Refilwe Boikanyo**



BOOKED OFF: Sipho 'Hotstix' Mabuse reads in bed at his Soweto home while busy on his matric studies. The musician is determined to complete his schooling four decades after dropping out of Grade 11. Picture LAUREN MULLIGAN

DRESSED in a pair of cotton pyjamas, slippers and a silky gown, an unwell Sipho "Hotstix" Mabuse opens his front door.

"You'll have to excuse my attire," he says apologetically as he courteously leads us into his lounge.

It's 12.30pm and he should be at Thaba Jabula Secondary School, sitting at his desk among his classmates — all adults pursuing their dream of completing matric.

But his busy personal timetable in which he has to divide his hours between school, rehearsals, gigs, the Southern African Music Rights Organisation's board of trustees and The Soweto Home For The Aged, has made him susceptible to the flu. He had to call in sick today and nearly postponed our interview, which he initially scheduled for prior to the start of his class.

"There's no preferential treatment there. My classmates and teachers, some of whom are young enough to be my children, know Sipho, not Hotstix. Hotstix doesn't exist," says Mabuse.

"I did not decide to leave school. It's just something that happened," says 60-year-old Mabuse.

"I started making music at school, but the demand for our performances was so great that we suddenly forgot we were students and became pop stars."

When he was in Form 4 (Grade 11) the band, The Beaters, which at that time consisted of his Orlando West school mates, Alec Om Khaoli, Selby Ntuli, Arthur Rafapha and Monty Saitana Ndimande, graduated from playing on school grounds to recording albums and touring the continent.

"The perks that came with that were enticing, especially at that age," recalls Mabuse.

"You have girls cheering you on and you suddenly have money — the type of money you've never known before. It makes you question why you need to study."

In the succeeding years, The Beaters gained international success and eventually became the vanguards of Soweto soul — a genre they created by appropriating and localising rock, funk and soul.

In 1985, two decades after he first appeared on the musical landscape, Mabuse embarked on a solo career

that produced the critically and commercially successful hits, *Burn Out* and *Soweto Jive*.

"I don't regret following a musical path, but in hindsight, I believe I could've done both (my schooling and my music)."

Last year he enrolled and registered to do six subjects: English, SeSotho, History, Geography, Economics and Ethnology, two more subjects than his teachers had advised.

"They said taking four subjects would be better for me because it would give me more time to focus on each subject, but I guess I was in a hurry to finish. But true to what my teacher said, I only managed to pass four."

"So when I went to pick up my results, my teachers said I'd done well considering that I took six subjects in a short space of time and had to balance studying with all my other commitments."

"But I wasn't too happy with my achievement. I know that I'm a bright student. That's one thing I know, so this year I need to work

harder to pass the two I failed and the subject I've added," he says.

After Mabuse fulfils his dream of achieving his matric certificate, a dream he has harboured for almost four decades, he will attempt two more unfulfilled ambitions — to study anthropology at "a university like Fort Hare" and to write a book about African music and cultures.

"My concern is that there are always people who write about us (Africans/black people), but we don't write about ourselves, because we are not well-equipped to write and articulate our own stories, especially when it comes to cultural issues and the origins of our music."

"We have not gone out to do our own conclusive research that will enable us to impart knowledge around those things."

"That's why the interpretation of what our culture is about is understood from a Western perspective," says Mabuse.

"For instance, I'm a Motswana. Has anybody ever written about the Tswana music, how it came about, why it sounds the way it does? It's always white professors who write about topics relating to our culture."

"Where are the black ones?"

'We forgot we were students and became pop stars'



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JUJU FASHION RANGE

On 'ANC to meet Mandela elders over Mandla crisis'

A MAN with privileges way beyond most South Africans, a name to be proud of and connections and influence to succeed in politics and business, yet Mandla blows it all by engaging in matters that take away from the needy. The ANC should have nothing to do with this. Let the courts deal with it. — BornintheRSA

On 'Mazibuko slams irresponsible ministers'

MINISTERIAL behaviour surely has been a problem for some time.

Forget not answering questions; I understand the parliament attendance records are also appalling. So let's see if this "fruitful" discussion actually amounts to something. — Thuka-Thuka

WHAT an admission, from the deputy president *nogal* — agreeing that the ANC has no respect for process and procedure. The question should really be why? — oooooooo

On 'iPads for elite schools'

PRINTING a single textbook is done once off and can be passed

down or reused for as many years as the edition is valid. Publishers know exactly how many trees are killed in the process and can mitigate the risk by planting a corresponding number in return (wishful thinking).

Actually, what is most likely to happen will be that many sections of one textbook will be printed out over and over again with no means of monitoring how many trees are "killed" in the process.

Bottom line: the advantage of online books is easy access and distribution, and not saving trees. Good initiative otherwise. — amaKK



POLL RESULTS

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Standby planes will continue to follow acob Zuma when he travels abroad.

Waste of taxpayers' money: **88%**

The Air Force knows best: **12%**

Total votes: 1 309

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