

# ALUMNAE NEWS

Rustenburg Girls' Schools Alumnae Newsletter

June 2019

## Message from RGHS principal

It was very special to have so many of our past learners attend our 125th Founders' Day Celebrations. The guest speaker was author and reporter for the Daily Maverick, Marianne Thamm, whose thought-provoking talk ended in a standing ovation from the audience. Our Bon Appetit society, under the guidance of Ms Lynette Jacobs, treated us to a wonderful spread.

Past learners of Erinville will remember their time of doing the annual Cabaret; this year the theme was Mamma Mia. This was well attended and, although there were not as many prize donations as usual, the auction still raised R38 000. This will be used to upgrade some of the boarders' facilities. The hostel's bus has been rebranded and will be shared with the school in future.

Unapologetically, I would like to highlight some opportunities for past learners to contribute financially to projects at Rustenburg.

This year we have received in excess of 800 Grade 8 applications. As usual, we are paying special attention to diversity and transformation. Amongst the applicants is an able learner whose family will not be able to afford to keep her in both the school and the hostel. I would like to invite you to help us provide her with the opportunity to be a part of Rustenburg. The cost is R4806 per month for the hostel, or R4275 for the school with an 8% increase per year for five years. If you or a group of friends would like to provide this assistance, please contact Ms Lynda Niddrie ([niddriel@rghs.org.za](mailto:niddriel@rghs.org.za)) and she can assist you in setting up a direct debit.

We have engaged the services of a group of parents, who are architects by profession, to help devise our ten-year development plan. We are excited to see their proposals regarding the development of the campus and the increasing of our facilities. This includes the option to add classrooms, better the traffic flow and security, build a water polo pool and an indoor sports centre. As you can imagine, such a project runs into the tens of millions of rands. We would welcome either contributions towards the project or assistance in securing corporate sponsors.

On 11 April we held our second official Dialogue Day of 2019, covering the topic of "Implicit Bias" which explores explicit versus implicit attitudes and how the unconscious mind controls our attitudes and decisions. The learners and the staff found this the most eye-opening Dialogue Day of the year, as they were challenged and were able to examine themselves and their potential biases. This led to further discussions and self-reflection.

Rustenburg hosted the fifth annual U16 Hockey and Netball Champions' Cup tournament – the biggest in the country – from 12 – 14 April. In the netball final St Stithians beat Rustenburg 14-11 and the hockey final was an all Eastern Cape event in which DSG beat Woodridge. The opportunity this tournament offers for our players to improve the game is invaluable.

This year our Music Department is performing Karl Jenkins' "The Armed Man" in the Cape Town City Hall in collaboration with Rondebosch and SACS on 23 & 24 July. Please do book your seats using Quicket by following this link: [www.qkt.io/ArmedMan](http://www.qkt.io/ArmedMan)



Michael Gates: RGHS Principal

---

*This year our Music Department is performing Karl Jenkins' "The Armed Man" in the Cape Town City Hall in collaboration with Rondebosch and SACS on 23 & 24 July.*

---

## In This Issue

- Founders' Day 2019
- Alumna swims around Easter Island
- Memories of hockey tour 1955
- Music and sports
- Rustenburg Alumnae now on Instagram



## Impressions of Founders' Day A letter to the principal

I matriculated in 1994 and was an Erinville termly boarder so most of my high school life (1990 - 1994) was spent at the school and it is a special place for me.

Thank you very much for the super Founders' day assembly and experience. I was so impressed by the progressive aspects that I noticed. Some might not be recent changes, but I wanted to make special mention of my experience...

How fantastic it was to have the Christian and Muslim prayers! This was such a change from when I was at school, when anyone who wasn't Christian would leave the assembly, only to return after the prayers. It was so inclusive and beautifully done. A wonderful change.

The guest speaker, Ms Marianne Thamm, was phenomenal, and the standing ovation was very fitting. Her words have stayed with me and it was such an important message.

I was pleased that the school song was not part of the assembly (unlike some alumnae who were upset about it). While the school song is part of the school's history, perhaps it is not fitting for the world today. Even in 1994, I found it to be derogatory ("we learn twice one are two!") and probably a bit too much emphasis on the colonial past. I am not sure if it was excluded intentionally, but for me it was quite fitting to leave it out, and the other songs that were sung were beautiful.

I got the feeling that the "RGHS old girls" / "Alumnae" were assumed to all be of the "old regime" and that is not accurate. I was fortunate to be at school during the transition and change from Apartheid to Freedom and back then we were so excited for the future and had a very progressive and inclusive outlook.

At school there were girls from all walks of life. Some came from harder backgrounds than others, not related to race. We all had our own difficulties but we were very close and supported each other, irrespective of race. Perhaps more so in Erinville than the day-girls because we lived together and learned about each other's cultures very quickly.

Continued on next page

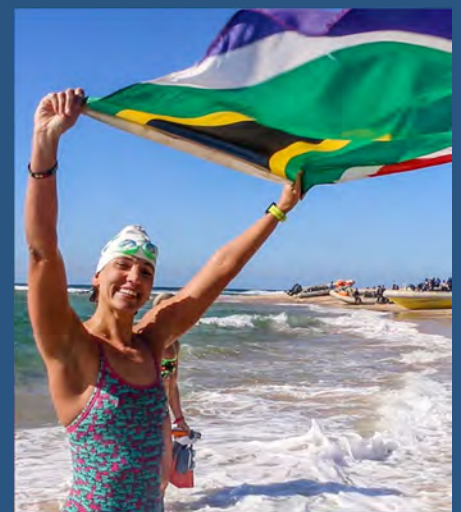
## Breaking a record for a good cause

Our congratulations to Sarah Ferguson (E'00), on her record-breaking swim around Easter Island in March this year.

After her swim across Ka'iwi Channel in Hawaii, Sarah founded a non-profit organisation called Breathe Conservation to raise awareness of plastic pollution in our oceans. She is also an ambassador for Plastic Oceans International.

She chose to swim around Easter Island, a World Heritage Site, where the sea contains one of the highest concentrations of microplastics in the Pacific Ocean, despite its geographical position.

On 15 March 2019, Sarah dived into the ocean at Hanga Roa in Rapa Nui. She set herself a target of 24 hours, but completed her 63.5 km swim in just 19 hours and 8 minutes, an incredible achievement in difficult conditions.



Sarah Ferguson



Continued from page 2

One Friday afternoon in the early '90s, my friend Lindiwe and I were walking hand in hand, as we often did, from Rondebosch back to Erinville. I recall a lady stopping her car and talking to us through the window. She said she was so excited and encouraged to see us being friends and that she had so much hope for the future after seeing us.

I was involved in a community project in 1993 that RGHS had become a part of, where we went into a township (not sure where) and we walked from shack to shack asking the residents what their issues were so that we could choose a design project to help them with. It was an eye opener for me and an example of how involved and progressive RGHS was at that time... definitely a pioneer in change.

I took African Music as an extramural... We even did gumbboot dancing in the Cape Town City Hall at the RGHS 100th anniversary celebrations (1994). We sang Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika in assemblies long before it became the national anthem.

I think that in the history of the school, the progressive nature of the school and the way change was embraced needs to be emphasised. It was a time when there was a lot of fear for the future, but RGHS had a very positive forward-looking approach and I think that is something to be noted by current pupils, and something of which to be proud.

I have not been involved much with the school since 1994, but I was really proud to be associated with the school in its current form, and I can see that the school continues to be a pioneer in change and is providing excellent schooling for our country's girls

- Anonymous



125 years of RGHS were celebrated with this formation on the hockey field on the morning of Founders' Day



Visitors from Australia at Founders' Day: two daughters and a granddaughter of Mrs McIntyre (past principal)



The girls of Bon Appetit whipped up delicious tea-time treats to be enjoyed by the alumnae before assembly



Alumnae of all ages attended the Founders' Day lunch



When the Class of '99 embarked on our first year of high school it was 1995, which marked the centenary of Rustenburg Girls' High School. We feel privileged to be able to celebrate 20 years since matriculating at the same time as the school celebrates its 125th anniversary, and to have had our reunion at the Founders' Day Celebration. We couldn't have timed it better!

It was heart-warming to see so many familiar faces; faces that one knows so well but hasn't seen, in some cases, for 20 years! Everyone looked well, and greeted one another with big smiles and warm hugs. It was touching how genuinely happy everyone seemed to be to see each other and reconnect.

We now have a group chat on Facebook and have spoken about the day many times since. It was a happy and joyful occasion full of memories and catch-ups. Thank you Rustenburg for the special day and for welcoming us back. The school is looking beautiful and it was impressive to see how it has grown.

During the process of reaching out to organise our reunion, it was astounding to learn how far and wide the women from our year are spread across the world. To all those who were able to come, thank you for being there and for making it so memorable. To those of you who weren't, you were missed. Here is to RGHS and our next reunion!

- Amy Cornfield



Matrics of 1999 celebrating their 20-year reunion

## Founders' Day reunites alumnae

The matrics of 1969 held their 50th Reunion at the 125th Founders' Day celebration.

A small group of about six 1969 matrics started meeting in 1989 for tea every couple of months. After our 40th Reunion a few more ladies joined in and a group of approximately 12 ladies have been meeting regularly over the past 10 years. Through this group and word of mouth, we managed to get 28 old girls to attend the reunion, coming from as far as the UK, Pretoria, George and Cradock.

Founders' Day at the school provided the perfect environment for the reunion and many memories were awakened. True to Rustenburg's high standards, the day

from beginning to end was on point. Morning tea and eats were first class. The special assembly afforded everyone the opportunity to experience the talent of the girls from a singing and musical perspective, the high achievers received their awards and the speaker was inspiring and topical.

The lunch served under the marquee in the quad was five star – a lovely touch was the cactus gifts given to all the guests as a memento.

The only "complaint" was that the school song was not sung in assembly but who knows, hopefully this will be rectified at our 60th Reunion.

- Denise Stirrat



Matrics of 1969 celebrated their 50-year reunion

# Touch Rugby World Cup 2019

We would like to congratulate Alumnae Jeanne-Marie Forcioli (E'94), Brionne Frankish, née Ricketts (E'04) Neda Isaacs (E'12), Lisa Przybojewski, née le Roux (E'93) as well as Ms Zaandre Barrett-Theron, counsellor and teacher of LO, on being included in the South African Open Women's Touch Rugby Team for the Touch World Cup which took place in Malaysia from 28 April until 4 May 2019. Danielle Ferrar (E'09) accompanied the team as the Team Doctor.

In the playoffs, South Africa beat Wales 6 – 3.

They all started playing touch rugby whilst at school. Some comments from them after the tournament:

Jeanne: "It was fantastic to have my Rusty bugs on tour with me. I'm really proud in particular of both Dani and Neda as I taught them both at RGJS."

Brionne: "We have become lifelong friends and family in many ways across three generations, celebrating many birthdays, weddings, births, godparents, academic and work achievements."

Lisa: "I thought that after the tournament I would be happy to hang up my boots and end my touch career on a high. Well, the exact opposite has happened. I can't wait to play more touch especially at such a high level. We learned so much about the game."



Seen at World Cup (left to right): Danielle Ferrar, Neda Isaacs, Jeanne-Marie Forcioli, Zaandre Barrett-Theron, Brionne Frankish and Lisa Przybojewski

## WISEUP

Rustenburg Alumnae sponsored the WISEUP (Women in Sport Education Upliftment Programme) U16 Netball team enabling them to take part in the Championship Cup held at RGHS from 12 to 14 April 2019. WISEUP focuses on uplifting young girls through sport. The girls are from Langa, Khayelitsha, Lavender Hill and Ottery.

Three alumnae, Mila Tonnie (E'16), Courtney Wheeler (E'18) and Kayla Wheeler (E'16) are actively involved with their coaching, and their mum who is involved with the organisation, approached us to sponsor a team.

## Mentorship programme

Sakeenah Kerbelker reported that a very successful first training session was held for the mentors with Lead 4 Life. This took place at the High School on Saturday 13 April 2019.

A decision was taken by the mentors to plan structured events, as well as fun events, to create a relationship between the alumnae and the current pupils. The Grade 9s will be invited to an evening where all mentors will introduce themselves.



## The bat: 1955 hockey tour



Handing over the bat to the Archives: Michael Gates, Mary van Blerk, Mary Rose Berrisford, Joan Parker and Hazel Campbell

Who would keep a little bat minus its elastic and ball for sixty-three years? Mary Swanepoel (Allday E'56) would. She cherished this record of a hockey tour to Durban and back on board the Winchester Castle, September 1955. Of course, Mary had us all sign it, so even games mistress, Marge Chamberlain, one of Rustenburg's longest serving teachers, wrote 'Po', Latin mistress Elizabeth Cartwright must be the 'Lizzie'. Also found are: 'Klaus, Wassie, Frosty, Hugo, Blondie' and more, all from Paarl Boys' High on a tour on the Winchester Castle – several temporary shipboard romances were enjoyed.

While we played matches in Port Elizabeth and East London, the boys visited places of interest, coming back with spoils of pineapples and other things to be shared with the Rustenburg girls. There were two girls who teamed up with young farmers from De Doorns in first class – very sophisticated we thought.

I remember the hockey matches as being pretty tough – Rustenburg was undefeated in Cape Town but on tour always faced representative teams – Eastern Cape and Border Schools on the way and then South Natal, North Natal and Natal Midlands Schools in a tournament held at Hoërskool Port Natal. Results for the record: played 9, won 3, drew 2 and lost 4. There was free time in Durban to enjoy its special delights.

Who was in the team? Captain, Carol Trigg (Kirk), goalie Yvonne (Shoony) le Riche, who won the Hockey Championship Cup in 1955 and whose whereabouts we don't know; Glenn Arnot (Theron), Joan Parker, Debby Toy (Brooke Sumner), Karen Staby (Boyd), Lorraine Cohen, Kitty Key, Inga Diggle (Fletcher), Hazel White (Campbell), Mary Allday (Swanepoel), Margaret Davison, Mary Rose aka Min Trainor (Berrisford).

Glen lives in England; Lorraine married a farmer in the Ceres district; Karen was last heard of in Queensland, Australia; Inga was living between Singapore and Cape Town when last seen; (she played hockey at WPC, Newlands, till she was fifty or sixty). Sadly Carol died December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and Kitty died a long time ago. Mary's daughter, Tessa, has been looking after the bat. Now its home will be the Rustenburg Archives. When Mary, who has lived in KZN most of her post-Rustenburg life, was in the Cape recently (January 2019) she met up with four of the team: Joan and Hazel of Cape Town, Debby (Hermanus) and me (Betty's Bay). While we wouldn't last five minutes on a hockey field, we agreed we are in pretty good shape, considering.

- Mary Rose Berrisford (Trainor, E'56)

## Congratulations

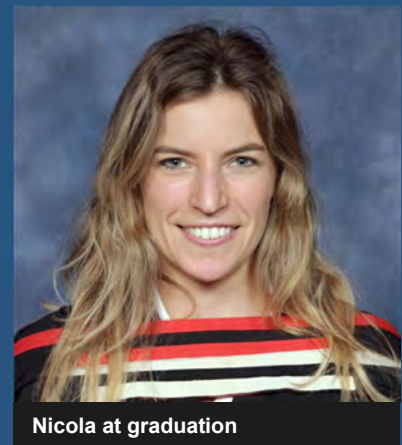
Nicola Steinhaus (E'11) graduated from the University of Cape Town in December 2018. Nicola was our top academic achiever in Matric in 2011, and went on to study Medicine. She graduated with two degrees concurrently, a MBChB with distinction in Basic and Clinical Sciences, and the degree with first-class honours, and a Masters in Public Health.

She did an honours year between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year medicine, working on a project of mixed Medical Biochemistry/ Infectious Diseases/ Immunology, which led her on the path to her Masters in Public Health.

Apart from her studies, Nicola joined SHAWCO Health in 2012, became a tutor in the same year, as well as became involved in a Youth Mentoring programme between 2016 and 2018.

The youngest of three siblings, Nicola was determined to forge her own path. She loves learning, and is a naturally hard worker who enjoys stretching herself and extending her knowledge. She considers herself an "outdoor junkie", loves trail running, hiking, and has completed ten Two Oceans Half Marathons. She attributes her success to a combination of factors – hugely supportive parents and network of family, friends and colleagues, and developing good time-management skills which establishes a healthy balance between work and leisure.

Nicola is currently an intern at Groote Schuur Hospital, and is aiming to do her community service year in a rural area which will enable her to get a better understanding of healthcare outside the Western Cape.



Nicola at graduation

## Kaleidoscope of Music

As part of the 125<sup>th</sup> Centenary Celebrations, the High School hosted a music concert on Thursday 14 March at 8pm, preceded by snacks and cocktails. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all.

The concert was performed by the music staff of both High and Junior Schools, the Alumnae Choir, and the 125<sup>th</sup> Celebration Big Band, which was directed by Murray Buitendag



Also performing were Alumnae Kaitlin Downie (E'18, seen in picture above), Imke Mühr (E'17) and Aimee George (E'14)

## UCT Orchestra

Seen playing at a performance of Bellini's Opera "I Montecchi e I Capuleti" at the Artscape in May, were Kaitlin Visser-Downie (E'18), Ali Wittenberg-Scott (E'16), Stephanie Lawrenson (E'15), Azra Isaacs (E'03), who is also 2<sup>nd</sup> Principal Viola with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, Nicola Mc Lachlan (E'16) and Olivia Stanton (E'16).



At the Kaleidoscope of Music concert

## Music news

It's always such a delight to see a number of Old Girls in the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, namely Azra Isaacs (E'03), who is the Sub-principal player in the Viola section, and Lynne Donson (E'12) and Seul Pearl Jung (E'14) playing as ad hoc members in the Cello section. Azra performed in a Chamber Music concert promoted by the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra on Saturday 11 May, at 19:00 in Erin Hall.

Yohan Chun (E'12) has also been busy performing here, there and everywhere with Francois Botha, including a Jazz Concert at the Nassau Centre and in a Morning Melodies' programme in the Baxter Concert Hall entitled 'Best of Both' on 27 March and in a Friends of the CPO fundraising concert.

Saskea Jacobs (E'10) is teaching English in Tianjin, China and enjoying it immensely. Monique Hellenberg (E '00 and past Staff Member in the Music Department) is also doing very well performing as a jazz/pop/r&b/world/musical theatre/originals vocalist in Bangkok, Thailand.

We think of Monique and her family especially at this time when Lisa, her twin sister, was killed in a freak accident on the way to Langebaan on Good Friday in April 2000. Both were in their matric year at the time. The Lisa Hellenberg Music Bursary was established in that year to commemorate Lisa's dedication, talent and love of music. The Bursary has been awarded to a deserving pupil in Grade 10 or 11 ever since to assist in their musical studies at high school.

- Liz Sole (Staff Member and subsequently Head of Music Dept, from '89 – 2016)

The Alumnae Choir is still meeting on a Tuesday evening at Rustenburg Girls' Junior School. This year they were joined by one of the mothers from RGJS, and Megan Sproat (E '00). If anyone is interested in joining them, please contact Lauren Lyons at [lauulyo@rgjs.org.za](mailto:lauulyo@rgjs.org.za)



# Guest speakers at RGHS

During Term 1, we invited several alumnae as guest speakers during Life Orientation lessons and at lunch times to address the Grade 11s or 12s. This is primarily aimed at giving the girls a clearer insight to various career options, and what type of work it involves.



Leigh Tobin (E'08), from Design Inscapes, talking to the Grade 12 Design class in January this year



Rebecca Davis (E'99), 2nd from left, and Haji Ebrahim addressed the Pride Society at a lunch time talk arranged by Ms Norval. On the right is Ms Jordan Tame (E'11), who is Head of the Media Centre.



On 6 February Jenna Frost (E'17) gave a lunch-time talk to those interested in applying for an Allan Gray Scholarship for Tertiary Education. Jenna, who won an Allan Gray Scholarship in 2017, is seen here with Ms Norval discussing her experiences in the programme. Jenna is studying BA LLB at UCT and is now in her second year.

## Obituaries

Carol Leipold (née Groenewald, E'61) passed away in Hermanus after a long illness.

Wilfred Chetwin, father to Patricia (E'73) and Margaret (E'78), passed away in January 2019. As a parent he served on the School Committees of both Junior and High Schools for many years during his daughters' time at Rustenburg; firstly as Treasurer and then Chairman. He worked tirelessly for both schools, providing invaluable support and guidance to both Miss Orton (RGJS) and Miss Thomson (RGHS).



# ROGU rebranded: a new name

At the AGM on Founders' Day 2019, the members voted officially to change the name of Rustenburg Old Girls' Union to Rustenburg Alumnae.

## Follow us on Instagram



We have a new social media account. Please follow **@rustenburgalumnae** to see new content in the future.

We also have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/rustenburgalumnae/>

Any pictures or news of interest should be shared with Sakeenah (see contact details in column on the right).

## New committee

The new office bearers and portfolios were elected at our most recent committee meeting on 13 May 2019. Please feel free to contact any of the committee members for information or suggestions.

Please also send news of alumnae and interesting stories to [hangerp@rghs.org.za](mailto:hangerp@rghs.org.za) or [Lesley.vanhelden@gmail.com](mailto:Lesley.vanhelden@gmail.com) for inclusion in future newsletters.

## Contact Us

### Rustenburg Alumnae Administrator

Pat Hanger: [hangerp@rghs.org.za](mailto:hangerp@rghs.org.za)

### Rustenburg Alumnae Committee

Ruth Romburgh (President)  
[ruthromburgh@telkomsa.net](mailto:ruthromburgh@telkomsa.net)

Anél Lewis (Vice President)  
[anel.lewis@gmail.com](mailto:anel.lewis@gmail.com)

Jenna Lavin (Treasurer)  
[jenna.lavin@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.lavin@gmail.com)

Jane Hofmeyr (Secretary)  
[janehofmeyr@gmail.com](mailto:janehofmeyr@gmail.com)

Sakeenah Kerbelker (Mentorship and Social Media)  
[sakeenah.kerbelker@gmail.com](mailto:sakeenah.kerbelker@gmail.com)

Rozeena Nordien (Mentorship)  
[rozeperez@gmail.com](mailto:rozeperez@gmail.com)

Lesley van Helden (Newsletter)  
[lesley.vanhelden@gmail.com](mailto:lesley.vanhelden@gmail.com)

June Watson (1st year reunions)  
[juneawatson@gmail.com](mailto:juneawatson@gmail.com)

Leila Sadien  
[leilasadien@gmail.com](mailto:leilasadien@gmail.com)

Pam Heiberg (Social Media)  
[pamheiberg23@gmail.com](mailto:pamheiberg23@gmail.com)