



# VGHS Old Girls' Union Grahamstown Branch Newsletter, September 2007

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# Welcome

Dear VG Old Girl,

We are delighted to present our 2007 newsletter, which contains news and pictures from the 2007 Founders' Weekend, and the VG Old Girls' Dance which was held in the school hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August... what a fun night that was!

A very big congratulations to the class of 2006 for achieving such good results in the 2006 matric examinations. The school had a 100% pass rate with 75% of the girls receiving endorsements. As a result of this VGHS received an award for being the "Top School in the District for 2006" and also received awards for the "Top Learner in the District", "Top Science Learner in the District" and finally an award for "Two Learners in the Top Five in the District". Well done, girls! Of course they didn't do it on their own, so a big thank you to the hard-working VG teachers who made this possible. Good luck to the girls who are preparing for their 2007 matric exams... our thoughts are with you.

Enjoy reading our newsletter and getting updates on old friends and remember that we would love to hear from you.

Please send this to as many of your old VG friends as possible and if you didn't receive this directly from us, please let us have your e-mail address so that we can add you to our mailing list.

Kind regards

Peta Bezuidenhout  
VG Old Girls Union, Chairperson of Grahamstown Branch



## Founders Weekend 2007: An Experience

I attended the Founders Weekend on the Saturday. At the Old Girls Union AGM and it was interesting to listen to what was happening with the Old Girls Union. As the Grahamstown OGU committee had only been active for the past year, they were looking for new committee members. I was voted onto the Committee as Secretary. This had apparently been planned ahead by Leanne van der Merwe and Janelle van Onsellen!

The breakfast went off very well, and many Old Girls caught up with one another and many memories were shared, with a lot of laughs.

We then went onto the sports fields with most Old Girls admitting that they were unfit and hadn't played hockey for a very long time. Despite this it was fun and enjoyed by all. The Old Girls did not do too badly in hockey, tennis or netball.

I really enjoyed seeing the Old Girls who came back for the weekend, it is lovely to know that they still have a keen interest in their old school.

Phillippa Long



# Founders Weekend Breakfast





# Founders Weekend Sports





## The class of **1997** reunion

This year's Founders Weekend marked the 10 year reunion of the Centenary matriculants of VG. Of course, like any other reunion, the cliché all round was "Has it really been ten years?" The reunion was attended by, in no particular order, Eloise Fourie, Laura Noot, Wynell Holland, Laurel Barberton, Chantelle Pepper, Tracey Josey, Michelle Malan, Melissa Oates, Tamryn Keeton, Kathryn Ryan, Helen Fox and Cheryl Hains.

Dinner theatre was a highlight for our group, as we gathered around a table to catch up and, quite frankly, gawk at each other's lives. Our group contained women in a spectacularly diverse range of careers ranging from an air traffic controller and a budding scifi novelist to a stunt double set designer! As Nicci Hayes always insisted we do: we took *the road less travelled!*

A lovely time was had around the breakfast table as another side of our group could be seen. Not only was there a table full of ladies catching up but also a fair share of babies, toddlers and bumps! It is one thing seeing a school friend for the first time in years - one imagines how they too have moved on and spent their time - but seeing little Lauras and Wynells is quite another story. It is only then that one realises it really couldn't have been just yesterday that we saw each other last.

If there was one thing that made us remember VG more than anything else, it was the singing. When the girls turned loose their talent and charm on stage - be it as a choir or a whole house - there were few of us without goose bumps. What a joy to have attended a school so infused with celebration and song.

A note of thanks to Cheryl Hains for trying to get us all together, and to Laurel Kriegler for offering to [attempt to] make it easier to do so in future.

Laurel Kriegler (Barberton) and Eloise Leher (Fourie)  
Class of 1997



## Class of 1997 Reunion





The VG Old Girls Union Dance was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Being the first dance we have hosted in a while we were most impressed with the turn-out and the funds raised for the OGU! Numerous prizes were handed out during the evening. The R50 for the ticket cost was definitely worthwhile as we were able to watch Mrs Farquhar and Mrs Schoeman groove to the tunes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century! Thanks to all those who supported us... we will definitely do it again! Hope to see you all there next time ☺





# ...and more OGU Dance pics...





## Special Old Girl Update: Gail Hayes-Bean – 1966

I matriculated in 1966 when Miss Richardson was still Headmistress! I was a boarder at VG from 1960 to 1966 and then spent a year at Rhodes. I only have contact with my best friend **Jane Lynch** who still lives in Grahamstown and is now Mrs Stockwell. I have just realised I also have contact still with **Wendy Jones nee Atherstone** and **Esme Nive nee Broadbent** and **Jenny Timm** and **Maureen Zahn nee Stapleton** all of whom matriculated before me. My cousin **Barbara Hoole** also matriculated there and now lives in St Martins in the Caribbean and is Mrs Howell. Her sister **Erica** left unexpectedly and currently lives in Durban where she is married to Peter Hutchinson. My Mother matriculated in about 1940 and was a Miss **Mary (Molly) Hoole**.

I have seen that **Renette Suttner** who was in my year has registered on SAReunited. **Alison Wicks** married Russell Gird but was subsequently divorced. **Jeanette Snyman** lived in Port Elizabeth in Linkside and we used to caravan together. **Beth Askew** from my year married Bennett Savage but was involved in a terrible shooting accident during the apartheid years and was eventually divorced from her husband. Last I heard **Gillian Webb** was somewhere like Saudi Arabia nursing and **Marjorie Dicks** from Zimbabwe was married and living somewhere near Durban.

I was widowed 9 years ago and have not really had any reunions at VG as I had 3 sons and lived all over South Africa during my marriage. We returned to Port Elizabeth in about 1987 and I have lived here ever since but I must say I don't see many VG girls from my year. Oh yes, **Corrice King** who married a Holmes lives here in Port Elizabeth as does **Carolyn Bradfield**, not sure of her married surname. It would be great to get in touch with girls from my year like **Veryan Edwards** and **Margie Britz** and **Maryna Bosch** and Jill Alcock and **Meryl Farley**, **Cheryl Harris**, **Isobel McLeod**, **Jenny Bull** and **Jane Sewry**, **Pat McDowell**, **Cathy Craig**. **Barbara Timm** of course died about a year after we left school in a car accident in Mozambique. I think **Lynn Gluckman**, **Miranda Gutstein** and **Cecelia Goldberg** may live in Johannesburg. **Hazel Hoole** is also an old girl and she is still single and lives in London and sees my son who is of course her 2nd cousin. She would have matriculated in about 1993/4. **Gwyneth Fergusson** is Mrs Willie Niewoudt and lives here in Port Elizabeth and her youngest son and mine were quite close and in the same year at Grey. Her Mom was the headmistress in the junior school who was murdered and thankfully they have finally caught and convicted the culprit.

Eleanor Brown was the Junior hostel when I started at VG and then we progressed in Standard 7 to Renfrew and then Ruthville and Beaufort House. Graeme College was in the middle of our school next to the Junior school building and playgrounds and stretched as far as Ruthville. Their rugby field bordered where Eleanor Brown's laundry building was.

So long ago - a lifetime and so strange how few of my year are to be found. Perhaps I have an advantage since I have had a computer at home since 1976! Of course it didn't have the internet then and the screen doubled as our TV but I have worked with computers for years.



## Old Girl Updates...

**Why we value our Old Girls:** an extract from a letter by Madeleine Schoeman to Lois Bassett on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday

*"I have always been aware of the incredible heritage of VGHS, the hard work that turned it into the success it is; I have been grateful to my predecessors and been committed to its continued success. I realized that Old Girls are important but I cannot begin to describe to you how your selfless commitment to our school keeps me going. It is so easy to get bogged down by the powers that be in education, by the endless bureaucracy, the negative press, and 15 year olds who have the answers to life (and sadly, who have experienced far too much of life). People like you, Lois, are keeping education going. You help us by constantly reminding us of our history and our obligation to the future. You and our Old Girls keep us grounded and focused."*

**More Golden Old Girls' birthdays:**

**Grace Theunissen** (Emslie) turned 90 on 5 June. Lois Bassett, Muriel Wood and Mrs Dubrovski all turned 80 this year.

**1968**

**Varline Fischer (nee Murray)**, P O Box 27045, Greenacres, 6057

**1978**

**Elsbeth Dixon** was featured in *Financial Mail*, February 2, 2007. She is making a tremendous contribution to leadership development in our country.



## Old Girl Updates...

### 1983

Denise and Trevor Long spent very special evening with **Vivienne Reich** and her family in Israel. Vivienne was head girl in 1983. Her parents owned the Grand Hotel in Grahamstown.

**Catherine Morris**, presently in England

### 1988

**Susan Matthews (Preston-Thomas)** is a Woman of Distinction Finalist and won the Business Womens' Association Start-Up category last year. She started Smat Clothing two years ago, but finds time to empower and mentor women in business. She lives in Port Elizabeth. Her company recently hosted Cuppa for CANSA and the St Francis Hospice Champagne Breakfast.

### 1989

**Kim Bezuidenhout** (nee Gowar), now in Australia

### 1991

**Nicqui Scott (Deacon)** : Recently moved down to Cornwall in England. We have been living in the UK for the past 10 years and have a little girl, Garnet, who is 3 years old and a son, Winton, who is one year old. I am a full-time home maker and mother but hope to start my baking business down here soon.

**Tinky Keeton-Borgstrom** lives in Cape Town and has a son, Adam David who was born on the 18th April 2007.

**Claire Inglis (Howarth)** lives in Johannesburg and has a daughter Grace, who was born in January 2007.

**Linda Moore** lives in Dublin and has a son, John Declan Moore-Scarff who was born in April 2007.

**Carys Walsh (Villet)** lives in Cape Town and works for KPMG

**Karen Kouari (Ehrich)** works for the Dean of Humanities at Rhodes University. Often involved in huge events organization and a stalwart in the OGU!

**Michelle Hanson (Bailey)** lives in Cape Town and has 2 daughters

**Sarah Stern** now lives in Auckland, New Zealand

**Tracy Francis** (Headgirl) is teaching in Dublin

### 1992

**Sarah Pachonick** . Lives in Reading in the UK and is at Reading University.

**Alison Ambi (Harry)** Living in London, Ontario, Canada. Working as the "Information Services Manager" of The Career Centre at the University of Western Ontario, where I recently finished a Master's of Library and Information Science. My favourite winter activity is cross country skiing ... but I do miss the beaches of sunny South Africa!



## Old Girl Updates...

1993

**Wendy Mulder** (nee Gowar) lives in East London

1994

**Kim Trollope** received her MSc

*Miranda Armstrong has just finished her degree at Cambridge University and Laura Alferts is starting there now. We would love to hear from them.*

1997

**Karla Schroder.** I'm still a very proud old girl, although a bit far away from the action now! I live in Christchurch, New Zealand

**Stephanie Wilson** lives and works in town. Address: [tephiebear@yahoo.com](mailto:tephiebear@yahoo.com)

**Ruth Cloete** is engaged and living in East London.

1998

**Jann Crichton:** I am currently in London, supply teaching.

**Ricodene Niekerk** has played herself into a role in "Binnelanders" – one of the most popular soapies in SA!

1999

**Tanya Bekker:** I am in PE working as Sales & Marketing Coordinator for a national ladies corporate wear company, SMAT Clothing (see Susan Matthews, 1988). In January I am moving to CT to set up and run the Cape Town branch of the company. It is very exciting, and the best part is probably the marketing and glam side of the job! Never a dull moment.

**Talitha Bekker** works at Equity Chambers, Grahamstown.

**Ingrid Siebörger (nee Brandt):** I got married in Jan of this year, and I am working in the Computer Science Department at Rhodes as a Research Assistant. I am also a part time PhD student in Computer Science at RU. Ingrid has been very involved in community projects.

**Pinda Boo:** [pindabooi@investec.co.za](mailto:pindabooi@investec.co.za). She would love to hear from you.

**Jacqui Murray:** Living in London for the past 4 years, been with my boyfriend for 4 years (yip, I met him as I got here), been travelling the world! Planning on moving to Australia next year.



## Old Girl Updates...

### 2000

**Kim Waters:** Since leaving VGHS I have completed my BComm and BComm Hons degrees at Rhodes. I then moved to London where I have been living for the past two years working as a business consultant.

**Kirsty Freeman (Long):** I moved to Johannesburg for greater career opportunities and got into the sales world. I married Robert Freeman, 17 September 2005. I am currently working for an Airtime Company called Eason Electronic.

**Leanne Van der Merwe (Chapman):** Fell in love in matric with a local Graeme boy so ended up staying on in Grahamstown, eventually got married to Leslie in October last year and now after my 11th year of being here. I suppose I can call myself a true Grahamstonian... I have been working at Rhodes University as an IT Support Consultant for the past 5 years and have taken up photography in my spare time! The only baby I have at the moment is my fluffy four legged foal named Zazu who will be turning 1 in October ☺. *Leanne is also very involved in the OGU.*

**Carmen Brandt:** I am teaching at Westering High School in Port Elizabeth

**Leigh Murray (now Sherrod):** First time in 5 years that she visited to SA.

**Jo-anne de la Mare (Steyn).** I am still at Rhodes doing my second year of an MSc in Microbiology. Got married in March to Clint de la Mare.

### 2001

**Tessa Malan** got married to Andy Johnstone. They live in Grahamstown and have the most beautiful little girl, Emma.

**Tamsyn Riddin:** I am currently studying at Rhodes University. I returned to do my Masters degree in Biochemistry (Nanotechnology) after I took a year off in 2006 to travel Europe as well as live and work in London.

**Alexandre Serfontein:** I've been super busy getting on with life. Completed my bachelor of journalism in 2005, moved to London with hope of conquering the graphic design industry and have succeeded. Working as a graphic designer for Titan Publishers (largest entertainment magazine publisher in the UK). Life is bliss and I couldn't be happier.

### 2002

**Megan Muirhead:** I am up in Johannesburg working as an Internal Consultant in a Recruitment Company.

**Jodie Davies-Coleman:** our 2002 deputy headgirl and Dorset house captain. After completing my four years of B.Journalism at Rhodes last year, I moved up to Durban and am now working as the Assistant Editor of the TAPPSA Journal (which is the mouthpiece of the South African pulp and paper industry). I am also a freelance writer for SA Plastics and a number of other industrial magazines... although I actually studied media design, so I am hoping to do more design and less writing soon!



## Old Girl Updates.....

### 2003

**Natasja Botha:** Now studying PGCE at Rhodes, haven't left Grahamstown yet, urgently looking for teaching post next year, hint hint! Also studying Instrumental Music Studies at Rhodes, working for East Cape Opera Company, plan to do Post Grad Dip in Opera at UCT as soon as year of service is paid off. I participate in various opera performances in and around Eastern Cape - next role in the Magic Flute in Grahamstown in September.

**Chandra Otto:** Currently I'm living in Canada but just until March 2008. I am here visiting Maria Pakhomova who also matriculated in 2003. I am currently working as a waitress in a 4 star bistro and travelling to see the sights the rest of the time. After I matriculated in 2003, I spent the next year working. In 2005 I went to Rhodes to study a Bachelor of Fine Art but that wasn't for me so in 2006 I studied at Eastcape Midlands College doing my management assistant certificates and now I'm here. I miss all the girls from my class and hope they are all well.

**Nadine Bailey:** I am currently in my 4th year at Stellenbosch University. I graduated in March for my BA Sport Science. I am currently just doing an extra year of studies (random subjects) before I do my PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) next year. Nadine has been elected to the Stellenbosch University Students' Representative Council.

**Robyn Pearson:** Nadine and I graduated together in BA Sports Science and now I'm doing my PGCE at Stellenbosch. Still loving my sport!

### 2004

**Zikhona Miso (Ziki):** currently in Pretoria studying Journalism

**Kate Meyer:** I am in my third year at Rhodes studying Industrial Sociology and Organisational Psychology. So many of us old VG girls here...seems no one wanted to leave our little town:-)

**Shirley King:** Rhodes University - 3rd year Zoology and Microbiology

**Simone Cridland:** I am over in Ireland still... a week's holiday gone very bad - 2 years later. Heading off on around the world trip, should be good!!

### 2006

**Simone Smit** (would have been 2006 matric class)

I went to VGHS all of high school, except I left at the end of grade 11 to move to the USA. My class was the matrics of 2006. If there is ever a get together (reunion), can I please be informed so that I might fly over sometime.

**Candice Speckman** doing well at Tshwane University.



## Cape Town OG get-together

**Brenda Weir** has organized a reunion on 5 October 2007 at Mowbray Golf Club. So far 70 people have expressed an interest. Please contact her at [brendaweir@absamail.co.za](mailto:brendaweir@absamail.co.za)

We look forward to lots of photographs! Have a wonderful time.

## Johannesburg Old Girls' Union

This group had their first get-together of the year at the beginning of May, with **Karené Welman** and **Chanté Norton** joining in.

In August a group of 13 had their annual lunch at the Benoni Country Club. Unfortunately Gonnies Leurs could not be there as she was touring Namaqualand to see the flowers. Corrie was also absent as she had to be in George.

Once again, this group has raised enough money to donate R500 to the school library, R500 to the Old Girls' bursary Fund and R500 to the Martha Emslie Bursary. This year the Martha Emslie Prize goes to Beth Stevens as the Top Scholar in Gr 12. Angela Berriman (from a proud tradition of VG Old Girls!) will receive the Johannesburg OGU Cup for Courtesy, Loyalty and Quiet Service. Michelle Schoeman will receive the OGU Prize for the Gr 12 learner with the most Merit Marks.

## Prize-Giving 2008

Please have a look at the VGHS website for the names of our present girls who received prizes donated by Old Girls.

## Grahamstown Branch Cocktail function & Induction of present Gr 12s

This will take place on Tuesday, 2 October 2008, and if last year's function organized by Peta and her team is anything to go by, it will be a special occasion!



## Facebook

Facebook is on everyone's tongue at the moment and is a new great way to keep in touch with past friends and make new friends...

You can use Facebook to:

- \* Share information with people you know.
- \* See what's going on with your friends.
- \* Look up people around you.

To register on Facebook...

All you need to do is go to the following link:

<http://www.facebook.com>

1. click on the link to register
2. Fill in your details
3. and login – *Voilà!* Three simple steps to join Facebook

Be sure to search for the **VGHS Victoria Girls High School Group** and join in!

***Just a request from Madeleine Schoeman: please do not invite or accept any current VG girls onto Facebook.***



## Information:

### Becoming a member of the OGU:

To become a member of the Old Girls Union please contact Karen Kouari (Ehrich – VG 1991) on [k.kouari@ru.ac.za](mailto:k.kouari@ru.ac.za) for further information.

### Contact Details:

Please keep your details up to date. This ensures that you receive the OGU Newsletter as well as any other news and information. Please e-mail your name, e-mail address and what year you matriculated to Trevor and Denise Long at [tlong@intekom.co.za](mailto:tlong@intekom.co.za). Or to [k.kouari@ru.ac.za](mailto:k.kouari@ru.ac.za) and Denise Heathcote at [office@vghs.escape.school.za](mailto:office@vghs.escape.school.za).

We are trying to update the OGU database but cannot do it without your help.

## FOUNDERS WEEKEND 2008

*[From 2008, this will always be in the first Friday of March].*

### Friday, 7 March 2008

Flag raising, Star Relay, Service to the School, Formal Assembly, Break with cake, Interhouse Singing Practice, Lunch, Spirit Session, Gala, Sundowners in the Centenary Quad, Supper Theatre and Concert.

### Saturday, 8 March 2008

Memorial Service at 9:30, Old Girls and Gr 12 Breakfast at 10:00, OGU AGM at 11:00, Interhouse Singing at 11:30, Sport with the Old Girls at 13:00

**SEE YOU IN GRAHAMSTOWN!**