

# Bi-Monthly Newsletter

OLD UNIONITE ASSOCIATION  
February 2025



PHOTO BY GIDEON VAN DER MESCH

## A Word from the Chairman

It is with immense gratitude and pride that I write to you today. Since the launch of our new fundraising platform, we have witnessed some remarkable generosity from our community. Every single contribution – no matter how big or small – has reaffirmed the spirit of unity and collective purpose that defines us as Old Unionites.

If you have not yet joined, I encourage you to do so – because together, we can achieve extraordinary things.

The power of R100 per month may seem insignificant in isolation, but when combined with the generosity of hundreds, it becomes a force capable of transforming lives. It is nothing in the lives of those who can afford it, yet to those

who need it, it represents opportunity, education, and hope. This is what we are building together – a future where every deserving individual has a chance to rise and succeed, thanks to the unwavering support of this incredible network. Your contributions are more than just financial support; they are a statement of commitment to the values we hold dear. You are changing lives, shaping futures, and strengthening the legacy of our Union. Thank you for believing in this mission and for playing your part in making a lasting impact. The year kicked off in its usual fashion of busyness and excitement, with Founders Day showcasing some wonderful sport, camaraderie, and friendly rivalry between Old Boys & Girls and learners.

Staff and learners alike have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the spirit of the year, and it is with great pride that we witness the hard work and laughter that happens on the sports field, the corridors, and the classrooms.

Here's to a fantastic 2025, where we harness the collective power of a community such as ours to make dreams come true.

*Rhett Newton*

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## A 106 not out!

The weekend of 24 and 25 January saw the Union Schools host its annual Founders' Weekend, celebrating an incredible 106 years of rich history and tradition.

**This event serves not only as a time to honour the school's founding but also as a reminder of the values that unify us and the aspirations that drive us forward.**

The festivities kicked off on Friday morning with a warm assembly led by Headmaster Mr William Pringle. His uplifting words set a reflective tone for the day, as learners filled the hall with a heartfelt rendition of the school song, followed by a prayer led by Head Girl Milani Pongoma. Special messages from learners, including Head Girl Aaminah Steele and younger learners Kari Stern and Grace Kitching, added a personal touch, reinforcing the spirit of unity that defines Union.

*After the ceremonial cake presentation and candle lighting, the learners excitedly left the hall to enjoy delicious doughnuts and take part in a variety of fun activities planned for the weekend.*

Later that sunny afternoon, the AstroTurf transformed into a lively battleground where Union's young hockey players faced off against their moms, dads and Old Unionites.

### Stay connected

The Old Unionite Association is dedicated to fostering greater connectivity and celebration among past learners of the school.

To stay connected, we encourage you to visit our website at [www.oua.co.za](http://www.oua.co.za), follow our Facebook platform or sign up as an AlumNet member.

It's as simple as 1, 2, 3. Just click on this link <https://unionschools.alumnet.co.za> to register.

And the best part is, it's absolutely free of charge!



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The laughter and support from the sidelines perfectly captured the essence of the Union community.

The excitement continued as the much-anticipated hockey match between the Old Girls and the 1st team was contested. Well done to the 1st team who claimed victory with an 8-3 score. Notable performers were recognized, with Leigh-Ann Murray named 'Most Promising Player,' Sarah Jacobs awarded 'Best Defender,' and Misha Newton honored for 'Best Goal.'

**As the day wrapped up, everyone enjoyed a delightful steak evening at the Tony Burrell Union, bringing together community members from all walks of life.**

Saturday brought more festivities, starting with the Gisela Kingwill Mother & Daughter morning, themed "Floral PositiviteA."

The school garden was beautifully transformed into a floral haven, thanks to the creativity of Mrs Anélle Ekkard and the matric farewell committee. Local musician Archie Pienaar provided a lovely soundtrack, enhancing the atmosphere as attendees savoured delicious treats and participated in exciting lucky draw giveaways. A highlight of the morning was the inspiring talks from Deputy Minister of Electricity and Energy, Samantha Graham, and Union educator Hanli Rose-Innes, who both resonated deeply with the audience.

As the day progressed, the annual Dads vs Lads cricket matches took centre stage, filled with laughter and friendly competition. Old Boys also joined the fun, playing against the 1st, 2nd and u/15A teams.

In addition to the cricket, the inaugural Founders' Weekend tennis matches were also greatly enjoyed by all those who participated.

The day culminated in a trophy presentation for the cricketers, celebrating the achievements of our talented learners and emphasizing the Union Schools' commitment to excellence.

**As the weekend came to a close, the Union community reflected on the wonderful blend of tradition and celebration that characterised the occasion.** The legacy of our founders continues to inspire, reminding us that we stand on the shoulders of remarkable individuals.

*Here's to many more years of honouring their memories, nurturing education and ensuring that Union remains a place where every child can thrive. Together, we look forward to a bright future filled with limitless potential as we continue to celebrate the spirit of the Union Schools!*



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OLD UNIONITE ASSOCIATION'S 1ST XI ON THEIR VICTORY AGAINST THE UNION HIGH SCHOOL 1ST TEAM CRICKETERS DURING THEIR FOUNDERS' WEEKEND ENCOUNTER! SHOUT OUT TO LUKE MCNAUGHTON, DEAN MARAIS, JASON OLIVIER, TAGON JACKSON, TYRON DAN DER STRUYS, JONATHAN CRANKSHAW, JASON JACOBS, ANDRE MARAIS, WILLIAM COPEMAN, MICHEAL BIGGS AND SISIPHO ARNOLS FOR BRINGING THEIR A-GAME.

MR RHETT  
NEWTON,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE  
OLD UNIONITE  
ASSOCIATION,  
LIGHTING A CANDLE  
IN MEMORY OF  
UNION'S  
FOUNDERS AND ON  
BEHALF OF ALL  
PAST LEARNERS OF  
THE SCHOOL,  
WHEREVER THEY  
MAY BE LIVING IN  
THE WORLD, AT  
THIS YEAR'S  
FOUNDERS' DAY  
ASSEMBLY AT  
UNION HIGH  
SCHOOL.



A big thank you to the Old Girls for joining us for this very special weekend and making this event extra special.

IT WAS WONDERFUL TO SEE FAMILIAR FACES BACK AT OUR ALMA MATER.



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## WE ARE PROUD OF:

From humble beginnings at our grand old school in the Karoo, Union High School, where all things cricket consumed his days and nights, and where his classmates noted that literally everything that left his mouth was "cricket-flavoured," we have followed the career of **Brendon Kleynhans** with pride.

Brendon, a Class of 2004 graduate from our hallowed halls where he represented Union's 1st XI, now serves as a mathematics teacher and the First Team cricket coach at the very prestigious South African College High School (SACS) in Cape Town. Beyond his contributions at SACS, **Kleynhans has made significant strides in the broader cricket community.** Notably, he has collaborated with the South African national cricket team, the Proteas, providing specialized throwdown sessions to enhance players' batting skills. His expertise in this area has been instrumental during training camps, where he delivers high-speed deliveries reaching up to 150 km/h to prepare batsmen for competitive matches.

**In addition to his national team involvement, Kleynhans has played a pivotal role in youth cricket development.** He has served as an assistant coach for the Western Province u/19 team during the Cricket South Africa (CSA) Khaya Majola Boys u/19 National Cricket Week held in Makhanda. Under his guidance, the team achieved remarkable success, clinching the final by five wickets. The last Khaya Majola they won was hosted in Cape Town. Currently, he has just finished the series with the SA u/19 vs England and will be off to the UK in May/June for the WTC (World Test Championship) final against Australia at Lord's.

*Kleynhans' dual commitment to education and cricket coaching underscores his dedication to fostering talent both in the classroom and on the field.* His multifaceted contributions continue to enrich the SACS community and the broader South African cricket landscape and **we are so proud to call him an Old Unionite!**

*May your career continue to flourish in the way that you so richly deserve, Brendan!*

## Creating a lasting impression



As proud Old Unionites, we believe in the power of memories and the impact they can have on future generations.

We are excited to showcase the start of Union High School's new **LEGACY PROJECT**, beautifully displayed on a wall at the school. *This project presents an incredible opportunity for Old Unionites, staff, learners and families to leave their unique mark on Union history while supporting our ongoing fundraising efforts.*

For just R500, you can secure a personalised plaque, measuring 15cmx15cm, that will honour your journey at the Union Schools. Whether you want to commemorate your own time as a learner, celebrate a reunion with fellow alumni, or inspire future learners with a meaningful message, these plaques are a wonderful way to express your connection to our school.

It is our hope that in years to come, people who stroll about the campus will see plaques that tell the stories of countless individuals who have walked Union's halls.

**Now, we invite you to be part of this tradition, helping to enrich our school's legacy even further.**

If you're ready to make your mark and contribute to a cause that benefits our entire community, please click on the following link to purchase your plaque: <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/299061-legacy-project-2025/>

Alternatively, you can make an EFT payment to the following account (please send a POP and inscription through to [uhsmarketing@unionschools.co.za](mailto:uhsmarketing@unionschools.co.za))

### BANK DETAILS FOR EFT:

U.H.S. Clearing Account  
Standard Bank, Graaff-Reinet

Acc no. 082528330

Branch code 050116

REF: Name & Legacy

**Join us in this exciting endeavour and help us continue to honour the past while building a brighter future for the Union Schools!**

# Our Heritage



The original Union High School Past Pupils' Association was started in 1929 at 83 Cradock Street – the then home of Captain Barter. David Light was elected Chairman and remained in that capacity until 1947. The association did not function regularly all that time.

Hans Muller, then a clerk in the Midland agency was the first secretary, who held this position until he left Graaff-Reinet for Kroonstad to take up the position of secretary of the Board of Executors there.

Hedley Pieters then took over the secretarial duties in 1938 which lasted about one year when he was transferred to Barclays Bank in Pretoria. Miss Nancy Cyrus took over in 1939 and held the position of Secretary for some longer time. When she left for Port Elizabeth 1946, Miss Merna Marnewecke filled the position.

The subscriptions then were five shillings per annum or three pounds three shillings, for "Life Membership" with a free copy of the School Magazine every year. The cost of a Blazer complete with an all wire Badge was three pounds stg. The association had some money, although not enough to embark upon any big undertaking such as a swimming pool, or a tennis court, etc. although these were the aims of the association.

In October 1956 Mr Arnott asked Mr Hoffie if he would take over the PPA and put it on sound footing. At that stage it was making a very poor effort to survive. Efforts were made as far back as 1929 to get the Association going but with no results. Nobody was interested and what use would such an Association be to the school? Mr Hoffie accepted the challenge but told Mr Arnott that he would tackle the problems in his own way and did not want anyone to interfere. First of all he obtained the Senior Certificate lists and made copies of each and then sent out these lists to ex-pupils whose addresses he knew asking for their help in tracing their old classmates. He started working on these addresses and sent out a circular to them all, asking for help and the assurance that as long as he was secretary the Association would not fail.

The fees were set at R6,30 for life membership and 50 cents for annual subscriptions. These were trying days, but every clue was followed and in many cases these proved fruitful and new members enrolled.

In February 1957 a well attended AGM was held and Frank Joseph was elected Chairman. Mr Hoffie was elected Secretary and Charles Blom as treasurer. Committee members were Henry, Elsabe Hartzenberg, Chookie Geard Snr. Abrie Goedhals, Jan du Toit and one or two others. It was at this meeting that it was decided to change the old Past Pupil blazer to a green one with the badge.

The first get together was held at the Drostdy Hotel in 1958. Unfortunately, seating was limited and only 99 were able to enjoy the wonderful fare served by the Serman family. After 1958 the meetings had to be moved to the Graaff-Reinet Hotel where more members could be accommodated. The yearly functions there were usually attended by approx. 200 guests. Growth was there and membership increased greatly.

It was during Mr Hoffie's time that the first Old Unionite Bursary was awarded to Ron Abbott. As membership increased so the number of bursaries increased until eventually three bursaries were awarded annually. One had only to attend the annual past vs. present cricket and tennis matches to see how the association had grown.

Mr Arnott once stated that the strength of school depended upon the strength of the Past Pupils Association. One had only to see what a difference the association had made to the life of the school. They came from all over the Republic, Rhodesia and SWA to attend the yearly functions.

Membership increased gradually and members were enrolled as far afield as Canada, USA, British Isles and Australia. Believe it or not, a past pupil who was resident in Timbukto in North Africa was enrolled. She was married to one of the British Commissioners and after three years, her husband retired and they settled in Scotland. It was an exacting work in trying to get this Association going, but in many ways it was rewarding. Different functions were attended and enjoyed by past pupils who came from as far afield as Zambia, Zimbabwe, and SWA. Membership had increased to over 700.

Special mention must be made of Mr Frank Joseph, who never gave up on keeping the association going.

The Old Unionites were instrumental in starting similar associations at both the Training College and Volkskool, and also gave Chum Ochse and Cecil Clement valuable help in getting similar associations going at Paarl Boys' High School and Muir College.

Currently the Old Unionites Association has a complete database of over 3000 members!

*"Heritage is not a luxury or pleasant recreational pastime, but an integral part of our future."*

Dame Jenny Abramsky



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# HOW TO DONATE TO THE OUA



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**STEP 3: CLICK ON THE FUND OF YOUR  
CHOICE – ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE FUND,  
SPORTS ASSISTANCE FUND OR  
DISCRETIONARY DEVELOPMENT FUND**

**STEP 4: CLICK ON THE GREEN DONATE  
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**STEP 5: SELECT THE CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT  
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SELECTED, YOU WILL HAVE TO MANUALLY PROCESS THE  
TRANSACTION.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT – EVERY CENT IS A VALUABLE STEP  
TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR EVERY UNION LEARNER!**



*Thank you for reading!*