ISSUE #12

Newsletter

OLD UNIONITE ASSOCIATION

October 2026



📷 AT THIS YEAR'S INTERSCHOOLS, UNION'S 1ST XV RECORDED A 41-15 VICTORY OVER VOLKSKOOL - THEIR FIRST INTERSCHOOLS WIN SINCE 2018 AND UNION'S BIGGEST-EVER WINNING SCORE AGAINST VOLKSKOOL AT INTERSCHOOLS. A SPECIAL RESULT FOR THIS GROUP OF BOYS, THEIR COACHES AND EVERYONE WHO HAS WALKED THE ROAD WITH THEM THIS SEASON.

From the Chairman's Desk:

Dear Old Unionites,
It certainly has been a while since our last newsletter.

Life seems to have been throwing balls from every angle lately and somehow it has felt almost impossible to just sit down and get to this edition!

Thank you for your patience as we catch up on some news. The absolute biggest highlight which I must mention is the fantastic **Interschools** 1st team rugby victory! We had silently hoped and quietly prayed, but we celebrated SO LOUDLY when our boys came through with a magnificent 41–15 win!

Our hockey girls did not disappoint either; as we have come to expect, they delivered a solid win, navigating the added difficulty of playing on Volkskool turf.
Although a few months have passed and life has moved on, we are still celebrating and remain unbelievably proud of our teams. We have also recently elected a new committee, bringing in some fresh minds to keep the OUA strong and forward-thinking. A very fond and grateful farewell was said to OUA stalwarts Jen & George Hope and Lou-Ann Gerber for their years of tireless service. However, being off the committee does not mean they are gone, and they will absolutely still be a part of the team going forward. At the same time, **we are thrilled to welcome our new committee members:**

· Kerry Hawkins (Class of 1999)
· Thabiso Oliphant (Class of 2004)
· Tyron Van Der Struys (Class of 2005)
· Imke Marais (Class of 2012)

We are so excited to see how they bring a new energy and excitement to the OUA - watch this space...

Finally, we are incredibly excited about potentially launching a London branch of the OUA.

Chris Wishlade (Class of 1990) has put his hand up and taken on the fairly huge task of rallying our UK folk. If you are based overseas, please reach out to him at chris.wishlade@btinternet.com. **We would love for our little Karoo school to truly go GLOBAL!**

As we look to the future, I want to remind each of you just how vital the Old Unionite Association is to the heartbeat of Union High School.

Our school thrives because of the legacy you left behind and the continued support you offer today. Every piece of input, every bit of involvement, and every shared memory helps us build a stronger foundation for the next generation of Unionites. Thank you for keeping the Union banner flying high, no matter where you are in the world.

Your passion is what keeps our traditions alive.

Rhett Newton

HOW TO DONATE TO THE OUA

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STEP 2: CLICK ON THE GREEN DONATE BUTTON

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

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

Barry Evans - Class of 1964: For The Love of Running





On the back of all the sporting achievements being celebrated at Union, we thought we would make mention of Old Unionite, **Barry Evans**, Class of 1964.

An avid athlete and sportsman at school, Barry continued his love for sport through his association with Cape Town's historic Celtic Harriers Running Club. With his dedication to pounding the tar and his club, Barry became the first Celtic Harrier to run 100 marathons in the CH colours.

Celtic Harriers was the original founding club behind the 2 Oceans Marathon, and Barry's passion served this iconic race for many years. He served directly on the Two Oceans Marathon NPC Board of Directors as a designated representative from Celtic Harriers, helping oversee the operations, strategy, and preservation of "the world's most beautiful marathon".

Through his leadership with the Harriers, he has remained a critical part of the local Cape running community, ensuring the legacy of the grueling 56km ultra-marathon route around the Cape Peninsula continues to thrive, and was awarded a lifetime membership with Celtic Harriers in recognition of his selfless work.

In the earlier days of the 2 Oceans Marathon, Barry singlehandedly organised 352 marshals and had to ride the route and identify where Marshals were required! Once the wisdom of hindsight set in, he started to call on Members of Rotary, Round Table and Lions to help with the marshalling for which they were paid R5 per hour!

They didn't even keep the money but ploughed it back into the Club for various community projects.

Thank you, Barry, for showing your true Union colours by creating a legacy of service and selfless commitment. We salute you!



OLD UNIONITES JARROD NAUDE AND MJ NEWTON WENT TO WATCH SA TAKE ON AUSTRALIA, BUT CLEARLY HAD THEIR OWN MATCH TO FIND! NO WORD YET ON WHETHER SUPERSPORT FOUND THEM WIVES, BUT FULL MARKS FOR TURNING A CRICKET OUTING INTO A NATIONAL RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN.



Paying It Forward: How One Gesture Unlocked a Future Leader

The true value of an education at Union High School is measured not just by what we take with us when we leave, but by what we choose to give back. For the Old Unionite community, supporting the next generation is a lifelong commitment.

Recently, a very special Old Unionite, **Charles van Schalkwyk**, chose to demonstrate this lesson in a profound way, setting a powerful example for his own children by offering a bursary to a deserving learner at Union.

That learner was Leander Kraai, who was in Grade 10 at the time. Leander is an exceptionally talented young man with immense potential, but a shift in financial circumstances meant that accessing the specialized resources and environment needed to fully nurture his gifts was becoming a challenge.

Through the generosity of the Van Schalkwyk family, the doors of opportunity swung wide open. The bursary enabled Leander to move into the hostel, immersing him completely in the school's academic, sporting, and cultural life.

Free from the weight of financial pressures and worry, his parents could focus entirely on what mattered most: cheering him on and supporting his journey. With these obstacles removed, Leander threw himself into every single opportunity, working tirelessly and leading by example.

The beautiful culmination of this journey arrived on 9 October 2026, when Leander Kraai was officially announced as the Head Boy of Union High School for 2027!

What an extraordinary achievement. The entire Union family could not be prouder of Leander, nor more grateful to Charles van Schalkwyk and his family.

It is a timeless lesson for us all: when we are in a position to move stones out of someone's path, we clear the way for them to achieve incredible heights.



📷 HEAD BOY LEANDER KRAAI (MIDDLE) WITH 2027 HEAD GIRL, AMBER SLATER, DEPUTY HEAD BOY, DWAYNE KOEBERG AND DEPUTY HEAD GIRL, JASMINE ABERCROMBIE.

Old Unionites are never far from the action!

Old Unionites are never far from the action!
A big thank you to **Rob Henderson** (Class of 1963) for coming along to support Union's 1st XI during the Cape Schools' Cricket Festival in Makhanda.

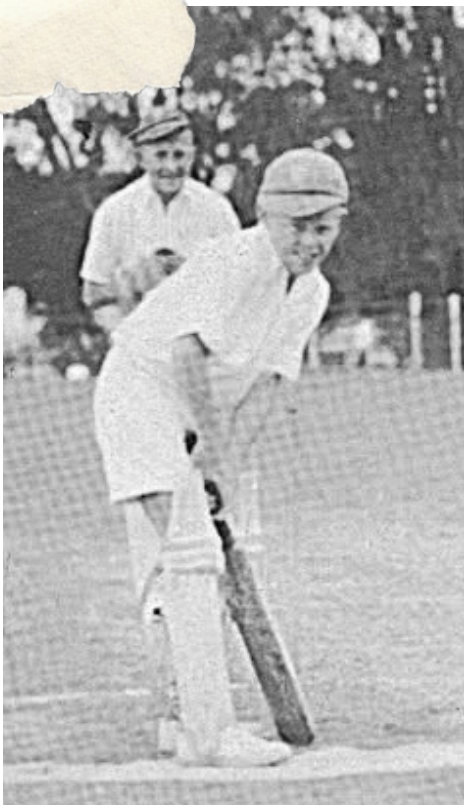
He is photographed here with the team and two proud Union cricket parents - and Old Boys themselves - Jason Jacobs and George Hope.

From those who wore the Union colours decades ago to the boys proudly wearing them today, the connection remains strong.

Once a Unionite, *always a Unionite*!



DID YOU KNOW?



Did you know that legendary South African cricketer **Graeme Pollock played his very first cricket match at Union**?
Celebrated as South Africa's Player of the 20th Century and widely regarded as one of the finest left-handed batsmen the game has ever produced, Graeme's first match for Grey Junior came as a nine-year-old playing in the U11 team.
He travelled to Graaff-Reinet to play against Union and announced himself in quite some fashion, scoring a century in a devastating innings.
That day he made 111 of his team's total of 120 runs, softening the blow for his opponents by going to fetch the ball himself in the adjoining cemetery when six after six from his bat cleared the boundary.
The last time Union's young cricketers came up against Graeme Pollock was apparently at Wheatlands. Fortunately for the local side, Pollock managed only about 10 runs on that occasion before he was dismissed - bowled David Steytler, caught Teddy Outram.
PHOTO: The accompanying photograph and snippet of text were published in the 1968 book *Bouncers and Boundaries* by Peter and Graeme Pollock. To our knowledge, the Union players fielding was Rodney Berger, Roy Prinsloo and Tommy Spence.

Tommy Spence - Forever part of the Union family

It is with great sadness that the Old Unionite Association acknowledges the passing of Tom "Tommy" Spence, **a much-loved and deeply respected Old Unionite**, who passed away on 19 August at the age of 83.

Tommy attended Union, until his matriculation in 1960, serving as Deputy Head Boy and Head of Arthur Kingwill House.

Though small in stature, he was a phenomenal rugby player.

He represented Union's 1st XV for several years and also had the honour of captaining the side, before progressing to the Eastern Province Schools' team. His talent later earned him an invitation to the Springbok trials, but sadly, an injury sustained while gathering goats in the mountains prevented him from attending.
Widely regarded as **one of the finest all-round sportsmen Union has ever produced**, Tommy was also an accomplished cricketer, who went on to represent Bethesda Road Cricket Club, as well as a talented tennis player. Such was his ability in athletics that some of the records he set at Union may even still stand today.

(Tommy's son, Warren, also matriculated from Union, where he distinguished himself as an outstanding cricketer and tennis player as well.)

Tommy will be remembered not only for his sporting ability and proud place in Union's history, but for the person he was: well-liked, greatly respected and held in genuine affection by those who knew him.
A **memorial service** celebrating Tommy's life will be held at the Jeffreys Bay Methodist Church on Tuesday, 25 August, at 11:00.
We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. **His memory will remain a treasured part of the Old Unionite story**.



In Memoriam: Leon Fouché (22 June 1945 - 5 August 2026)

When Leon Fouché joined the Union staff in 1974, few could have imagined the lasting impact he would have on generations of Unionites over the decades that followed.

For many learners, his music classroom was a place unlike any other - filled with learning, laughter and discovery.

He introduced countless young people to the world of music, inspiring a lifelong appreciation for everything from choirs and musicals to symphonies and opera. *For some, that inspiration became a career; for many more, it became a treasured part of their lives.*

Leon had a remarkable gift for connecting with young people. He encouraged the gifted, nurtured the uncertain and somehow managed to convince generations of Union boys that singing in the choir was not only acceptable, but enjoyable.

Many still find themselves singing the songs he taught them decades later.

His wit and humour became legendary. He had an uncanny knack for giving people nicknames that often stayed with them for life, and **his mischievous spirit produced countless stories that have become part of Union folklore**.

Former colleague Gerald Buisman fondly recalled discovering Leon secretly handing out passes to eager pupils during an Interschools match so they could "baljaar" behind the opposition's dead-ball line - much to Leon's amusement and the frustration of visiting supporters.

Leon was also a magical producer of school musicals. Rehearsals often appeared wonderfully chaotic, yet opening night invariably delivered performances that left audiences captivated. One such production even required a moped on stage. Having never ridden one before, Leon decided to learn after rehearsal and promptly crashed it on the hall floor - an incident he tried unsuccessfully to keep secret and which became the joke of the month.

Beyond the laughter was a deeply gifted teacher. He understood young people, accepted them as they were and had a special ability to help those who struggled to find confidence and success.

Through music, patience and humour, he changed lives. His reputation extended far beyond Graaff-Reinet.



At Stellenbosch University, where he had studied, stories of his student days were still being told years later. Those fortunate enough to have been taught by him carried that connection with pride.

The many memories shared since his passing tell a consistent story: Leon Fouché was more than a music teacher.

He was a mentor, a character, a source of encouragement and joy, and one of those rare educators who became part of the very fabric of a school, and **current learners are reminded of his contribution through the Leon Fouché Floating Trophy for Music, which is awarded annually**.

May he rest in peace.

A Union adventure that has lasted a lifetime!

Every now and then, a piece of Union history finds its way back to us that is simply too good not to share.

This one begins, rather wonderfully, with two Standard 9 boys sitting opposite one another during prep at Union's Arthur Kingwill House in 1964, scribbling ideas on scraps of paper and wondering what they might do that was "*daring, adventurous and challenging*".

Somewhere in that conversation, Old Unionites **Alex Wood and Peter Rous** decided they would canoe the Orange River. Before long, as Alex remembers it, the idea had become something of an obsession.

And so began an extraordinary undertaking by two 17-*year-old schoolboys*.

There was no internet to consult, no GPS and very little in the way of specialist equipment. They had to work things out for themselves - from the design and preparation of their canoes to waterproofing their supplies, plotting their route and raising money.

Alex caught poisonous snakes and sent them by rail to a laboratory in Pretoria for antivenom production, while Peter sold honey from his beehives. Their headmaster, Mr Herby Arnott, allowed them to practise and camp at the then Van Ryneveld's Pass Dam, where the kilometres spent carrying their canoes to and from the water turned out to be useful preparation for the portaging that lay ahead.

By the time they set off, the canoes had been adapted, supplies packed into homemade waterproof bags and every detail considered as carefully as two schoolboys could manage. **There were sceptics**, **of course**, **and plenty of butterflies**, **but also family support and a determination to see the idea through**.

What followed was the sort of adventure that is difficult to imagine today. There were long days on the water, rapids, rocky channels, capsizes, damaged canoes and repairs made along the riverbank.

There were beautiful campsites, fires and strong coffee at the end of exhausting days and countless encounters with kind people along the way.

The boys navigated with ordinary road and topocadastral maps, carefully working out where they were as they moved steadily westwards.





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Peter Rous (foreground) and Alex Wood (background) seen with one of the fibre-glass canoes they will attempt the 1,200 mile journey down the mighty Orange River on Monday (December 14).

Some moments were genuinely dangerous. Others, viewed more than six decades later, make for wonderful stories. Through it all, Alex and Peter simply kept going - solving the next problem, repairing what had broken and paddling on.

After 34 days, **including 28 days of canoeing**, they finally reached the Ernest Oppenheimer Bridge between Oranjemund and Alexander Bay, where Alex's parents were waiting for them. Alex recalls the relief and gratitude of seeing that bridge and realising that they had actually made it.

Their remarkable journey attracted considerable attention at the time. Editor Frank Collins later pieced together the boys' rather battered trip notes and told their story in the April 1965 edition of *Personality* magazine under the memorable headline, "*First to Conquer the Orange River - Two Schoolboys*."

What began as an idea between two Union boys during evening prep became an adventure they would carry with them for the rest of their lives.

Looking through Alex's photographs now, 60 years later, one sees far more than an impressive canoeing expedition. *There is youthful courage in it*, *certainly*, *but also friendship*, *ingenuity*, *careful preparation*, *perseverance and the ability to make a plan when things don't quite go according to one*.

And perhaps that is why, all these years later, the story still feels so very much at home at Union.

Four sets of sisters. One 1st hockey team. And a lovely little piece of Union history.



This year, Unions 1st hockey team featured **FOUR** sets of sisters: Nadine & Leigh-Ann Murray, Alyssa & Katelyn Trollip, Cayla & Misha Newton and twins Amber & Jade Slater.

Four pairs of sisters, sharing the same jersey, the same school colours and, no doubt, more than a few opinions about hockey along the way!

What makes it even more special to us as Old Unionites is that three of these four sets of sisters are **the children of Old Unionites** - Anthony Murray (Class of 1996), Shaun Trollip (Class of 1993) and Rhett Newton (Class of 1992).

It is such a lovely reminder that the Union story doesn't simply end when a learner leaves school. Sometimes, it finds its way back through the next generation.

And the family connections don't stop there. Pictured alongside the sisters are the Trollips' youngest, **Kirsten**, a Grade 6 learner representing Union's U13A hockey side, and the Murrays' eldest, **Ivan**, a member of the Class of 2022.

This year also marks a little changing of the page. Leigh-Ann, Misha and Katelyn will matriculate at the end of the year, while the others still have a few more seasons in which to pull on the green and represent Union.

For those of us who love the traditions and stories that make Union what it is, photographs like this are rather precious.

They capture much more than a hockey team - *they capture families, friendships, generations and a sense of belonging that carries on long after the final whistle.*

To the Murray, Trollip, Newton and Slater families: thank you for adding your own chapter to the Union story.

What a lovely one it is.



Welcoming the Class of 2026 to the fold

There are certain moments in a matric year that quietly remind you that school is coming to an end and today's Old Unionite Association induction was one of them.

Union's **CLASS OF 2026** gathered with members of the OUA committee as they were formally welcomed into the Association - *becoming part of a community that extends well beyond their years at school*.

OUA Chairman **Mr Rhett Newton** spoke to the matrics about something quite simple, but important: **the value of staying in touch**. He encouraged them to hold onto the friendships they have made at Union, to keep up with their classmates as life takes them in different directions and to remain connected to the school that has been such a big part of their lives.

There was a rather lovely personal connection to his words this year, too, with his daughter Misha among the matrics being inducted. It made a message about maintaining those lifelong Union connections feel particularly fitting.
As part of their induction, each matric was also gifted a beautiful leather Class of 2026 keyring by the OUA - **a small keepsake to mark their transition** from Union learners to Old Unionites.

Once the formalities were over, the OUA treated the Grade 12s to lunch - a chance simply to sit together, chat and enjoy one another's company during these last few weeks of school.

Their time as Union learners may be drawing to a close, but today was a gentle reminder that **being part of Union doesn't really end when you leave school**.







1978 meets 2010!
An afternoon party in Cape Town brought an unexpected Union connection when Dr Jim Te Water Naudé (Class of 1978) bumped into fellow Old Unionite Liso Langman (Class of 2010). **Thirty-two years may separate their matric classes, but that's no obstacle when you have a school in common!** A lovely reminder that you never quite know where you'll find another member of the Union family.

