



NEWSLETTER: VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1

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FROM THE EDITORS DESK



We've leaped into a very busy 2025. Term 1 has come to an end and we're still catching our breath. There's been so much excitement at the SADASA office organising first term festivals and planning the upcoming second term festivals. Most interesting of all, we are preparing for SADASA's first ever Primary School Showcase in October. We are very grateful to Westville Senior Primary for offering their venue for the event. Members of our adjudicator panel will be hard at work over the next few months nominating primary school learners who show outstanding ability. It's going to be an opportunity not to be missed! We also welcomed two new member schools, Prescient Primary and Krugersdorp High. We look forward to visiting both schools this year.



Rosanne



OUR ADJUDICATOR PANEL IS READY FOR 2025

On Saturday, 8 March 2025 our dedicated team of adjudicators met at our Hillcrest offices to strategise, plan and share ideas. Thank you for attending the meeting from left, Mbali Nguse, Carmen O'Donoghue, Tracy Laubscher, Dawn Harrison, Carla Tate, Philippa Savage, Les Coull, Margie Marnewick and Rosanne Hurly-Coyne.

🥳 We are energised and looking forward to adjudicating our vibrant 2025 festivals.





AGM

The 82nd AGM was held on Saturday, 22 February 2025 at SADASA's offices at Burnside Office Park in Hillcrest, Durban.

In Dr McMurtry's inspiring and engaging Chairman's report, he examined our changing, developing world and discussed the importance of keeping the Arts and Humanity Studies in the Curriculum. The development of a person's powers to visualise and their capacity for original thought and for relating themselves through personal feelings to their environment, is often blocked during adolescent years.

Dr McMurtry noted the resignation of long standing committee members, Mr David Spiteri and Mr Brett Beiles. He wished David and his wife Jenny well in their new home in Cape Town and wished Brett well in his retirement.

Dr McMurtry and the Executive Committee welcomed Mrs Irene Govender to the committee. Mrs Govender has been co-opted to serve on the committee in 2025.

[The full report can be read here.](#)

The following members of the Executive committee remain in office until March 2026:-

- Dr Mervyn McMurtry (Chairman)
- Mrs Margaret Marnewick (Vice-Chairman)
- Mrs Lesley Coull
- Mrs Irene Govender
- Mrs Mbali Nguse
- Ms Philippa Savage
- Mrs Jean van Elden



SADASA committee 2025

Missing from the photograph: Mrs Jean van Elden and Mrs Les Coull



INTRODUCING OUR TALENTED SADASA CONVENORS...

Enjoy reading about some of SADASA's talented convenors of some of our festivals. If you have been a convenor for many years or have just begun organising your school's festivals, we'd love to hear your story. Please contact the SADASA office.



INTRODUCING... LIEZA PICKLES @ CARLYLE COLLEGE

Lieza recently introduced her learners at Carlyle College to the festival. Lieza remembers:

"I can still recall standing in front of the Speech and Drama adjudicator when I was in Standard 1 (Grade 3) telling her the story about the moon that I had just made up for the impromptu storytelling section of the festival. This is a memory that lives with me because I love stories and I recall the praise that I received from the adjudicator as a moment that would go on to cement my love for English and Public Speaking.

After completing my teaching degree, majoring in English Studies, I went on to read for my Honours and then Masters degrees, also with a focus on English and most specifically the teaching of English.

The teaching of poetry and literature is what excites me the most in the classroom, and after taking up my role as an English teacher at Carlyle College in Nottingham Road I was eager to introduce the SADASA Speech and Drama festival to the



Lieza Pickles

earlier this term about whether they would get the opportunity again this year to participate I was thrilled to see their eyes light up when I responded positively.

I am very fortunate to work at a school that welcomes the inclusion of the arts and extracurricular activities that provide a creative outlet for so many. The skills that learners can master and demonstrate in their performances during this festival are invaluable and will stand them in good stead for the future."



INTRODUCING...

JULIA KNOWLER @ CHELSEA PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Julia Knowler has been a convenor at Chelsea Preparatory for many years and shares some interesting anecdotes with us.

"My involvement in the Speech and Drama festival goes way back to my primary school days at Gordon Road Girls' School when I NEVER entered the festival. I learnt all the words to some of the poems from hearing the children enter and practise in front of the class for the teacher...over and over again! No one encouraged me to enter and I never took the initiative.

Years later, when I began teaching at DPHS, every boy was encouraged to participate in the festival and it was the duty of every class teacher to ensure they were well-prepared. I learnt so much during my time there with exceptionally talented staff.

Many years passed and, by the time I began teaching at Chelsea Preparatory, class teachers had so much on their plates, entries in the Speech and Drama festival were few and far between. Since I'm pretty awful at Sports, I felt this could be my little sphere of influence and set about encouraging pupils I saw during Media lessons, to enter the festival.

I am happy to report that there are now many pupils who thoroughly look forward to entering each year - especially the Grade 6s and 7s who delight in re-enacting group items like Roald Dahl's poems. Trying to find fresh, new group items is a real challenge! As is trying to find a gap in the childrens' busy lives to hear their poems and offer guidance. Thankfully, we now have 5 members of staff who are passionate about Drama and this has elevated the status and scope of dramatic arts offered at Chelsea P.

The very best reward is watching children animatedly and enthusiastically practise their pieces together in groups or with their partners in the library during breaks. It is their enthusiasm that is priceless - their dedication to the task, their efforts to maintain eye contact when this is a real battle for them, and

watching those with dead-pan faces try so hard to show some expression. In this fast paced and busy world, it affords every entrant the opportunity to be seen, heard, feel valued and recognised.

Thank you SADASA for keeping this festival alive!"



JULIA KNOWLER



INTRODUCING... CARA KRUGER @ WATERFALL COLLEGE

We first met talented Cara Kruger when she won SADASA's prestigious Bruce Piper Award Monologue Competition in 2017. Cara has been following her dreams and is now Speech and Drama teacher at Waterfall College. Cara shares...

"From a young age, I discovered a deep passion for Theatre and Dramatic arts. It became a powerful avenue for me to expand my knowledge, express creativity, and develop confidence. At school I participated in numerous showcases and productions.

For the past seven years, I have had the privilege of working as a high school teacher. This role has been immensely rewarding, giving me the opportunity to inspire and guide young minds. Currently, I'm pursuing my Honours in Inclusive Education. As part of my thesis, I'm exploring the profound impact Theatre and Drama can have on youth, fostering active participation, teamwork, and providing students with valuable life skills.



Cara Kruger

Last year I joined the staff at Waterfall College, a school situated on 41 acres, nestled in the Valley of 1000 Hills in KwaZulu-Natal. It was a joy to enter my first group of students into events, where they achieved remarkable results. Two students were nominated to compete in the Bruce Piper Award Monologue Competition. Watching my students engage in activities that shaped my own journey has been a deeply rewarding full-circle moment."



INTRODUCING... BARRY OOSTHUYZEN @ DPHS

DPHS has a new SADASA convenor this year. He is working closely with his colleague, Glynis Harker to plan the D.P.H.S. SADASA festival in 2025. Hear what his colleagues say about him.

"Barry Oosthuizen, affectionately known as Mr O by the boys' is a passionate teacher who enjoys seeing students excel on stage, whether it be in school plays, choir or Speech and Drama performances. He spent 15 years at Westville Senior Primary School before being involved in their Culture and Speech and Drama programmes.

In 2025 he moved to DPHS as the Director of Performing Arts. Working with Glyn Harker, Cara Roberts and Alex Patrick, the Performing Arts department at DPHS is alive with excitement."



Barry Oosthuizen
with the DPHS Music & Drama team



INTRODUCING... CHERYL & CHERYL @ WESTVILLE SENOR PRIMARY

These ladies are indeed a dynamic duo. Cheryl Nyman has been convenor of the SADASA festival for ten years, inspiring young learners at Westville SP to enter the festival. This year, Cheryl Franks has come on board. We look forward to working with both Cheryls in 2025.

Cheryl Nyman reflects on her years working as the convenor at Westville Senior Primary...

"I convened the annual Speech and Drama Festival at WSPS for ten years, from 2014 to 2024. I also produced an annual evening event for parents, at which some of the most outstanding entries of the festival were showcased. For the last three years, I was the clerk to the adjudicator and that made my role as convenor very rewarding as I was able to learn from the adjudicator as she gave feedback to the entrants. I also witnessed the growth and development of the learners who entered each year, made improvements to their delivery and extended themselves. I entered Speech and Drama festivals annually when I was at school, and I'm thrilled that this professional association, with its high standards, is still going strong. Westville Senior Primary has a long, supportive and harmonious relationship with SADASA - we still have syllabi from previous years, the earliest of which dates back to 1973. This year, I have handed over the reins to my colleague, Cheryl Franks, and am looking forward to the SADASA Primary Schools' Showcase, which will be held at WSPS on 18 October 2025."

Cheryl Franks is so excited that she is running this year's SADASA festival at Westville Senior Primary. She says:

"Performance and the arts have been a significant part of my life. I have performed as a singer and I have had the privilege of performing at Barnyard Theatre, Splashy Fen, White Mountain Festival, Music in the Hills, and the Westville Theatre Club, collaborating with incredible artists.

In addition to my performance background, I am in my fourth year of teaching at Westville Senior Primary, where I head the English department, run the Writer's Club and teach a Grade 7 class. I previously led the school choir and assisted teaching Music and Drama. Last year, I participated in the Speech and Drama Festival with my Grade 7 class, guiding them in Choral Verse performance. It was an unforgettable and rewarding experience.

While I have spent many years on stage myself, I now find immense joy in helping young performers shine. I am excited to lead this year's festival and look forward to celebrating the incredible talent and creativity of our learners."



Cheryl Nyman



Cheryl Franks



INTRODUCING JULIE MEIKLEJOHN @ COWAN HOUSE

Julie has had strong connections with the SADASA family for many years, first offering her service on the adjudication panel while her children were young and then, after joining the staff of Cowan House, she has convened outstanding SADASA festivals for over 20 years.

Julie remembers:

"My time at Cowan House began just over 21 years ago teaching Drama to the Pre Primary and Junior Primary classes. It was during this year I was offered a full-time teaching post at the school as a Grade 5 teacher. At the time I also taught Drama privately and adjudicated for SADASA. When I became a full-time teacher at Cowan House I started teaching Drama to the Senior Primary classes and introduced the SADASA festival to Cowan House.

I have always been passionate about teaching Drama and have put on many productions over the years. We are so pleased that we are able to participate in the Festival every year, resulting in a high standard across all the grades. We encourage our pupils to participate in a variety of categories and all classes from Grade 1 to 7 enter a Choral Verse. Our isiZulu and Afrikaans departments also enjoy being part of the Festival and it has been lovely to see the growth in individual entries in the isiZulu categories.

Cowan House is an independent co-educational preparatory school situated in Hilton. We are 77 years old this year and have just over 420 pupils in our school from Grade RRR to Grade 7. Although we are predominantly a day school, we do have a full boarding house and have both girls and boys in the boarding establishment which is commonly referred to as 'home from

home.'

Cowan House is proud to be associated with SADASA and we have been delighted to host the High School Monologue Competition for the last two years."



Julie Meiklejohn



AN OCTOBER FEAST

Primary School Showcase

Our first ever Primary School Showcase will take place at Westville Senior Primary on Saturday, 18 October 2025. Learners who show outstanding ability will be nominated by their adjudicator and invited to attend this exciting event. The Junior Primary Showcase will precede the Senior Primary School Showcase.

The annual High School Bruce Piper Award Monologue Competition

This event will take place in October. However, the date will be set after we have received the Grade 12 examination time table.





BREAK A LEG

Did you know... this theatrical expression, meaning 'good luck' originated in the theatrical world in the early 20th century as a superstitious way to avoid directly wishing someone good luck, which was thought to bring bad luck.

The phrase "break a leg" was first recorded in print in 1921 by Robert Wilson Lynd in an article about superstition in the theatre and horse racing.

One theory about its origin comes from when in early theatre, ensemble actors would stay behind the "leg line", the curtain's side boundary, until they were called to perform. "Breaking a leg" could have meant breaking past that boundary and getting a chance to perform and get paid.

 *Wishing all convenors and participants of SADASA second, third and fourth term festivals "Break a leg!" *



DON'T MISS OUT!

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2025

8-10
August



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www.hiltonfestival.co.za



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