



Union High School

Headmaster's Newsletter

Term 4 | December 2021



Seen ABOVE is Union High School's new Prefect Body for the 2022 Academic Year in what has become the traditional annual prefect photo for the school's letterheads and social media cover photos.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented the world with perhaps the greatest window for leadership many of us have seen in our lifetime. On the back-end of difficulty is the opportunity. Not exploitative opportunity, as some may attempt, but the opportunity to see sparks of courage, wisdom, innovation, and character take hold and fan into flame, fueled by a crisis and the need for steady and strong men and women to stand against the tide of incoming despair.

Now more than ever, it is imperative for young leaders to rise from the shadows and steer the youth into a future of possibility and hope. Leadership isn't an identical idea. It is iterative in nature and innovative in expression. It is the ground upon which history is written and it is the call of greatness within each soul.

As the Count of Monte Cristo once toasted the young Albert, *"Life is a storm my young friend, you will bask in the sunlight one moment, be shattered on the rocks the next. What makes you a man is what you do when that storm comes. You must look into the storm as you shout... do your worst, for I will do mine"*.

As our new prefect body prepare to lead the school in 2022, we wish them all the very best for the year that lies ahead with the hopes that you raise your voice in that solemn and spectacular fashion as you yell, **"do your worst, for I will do mine"**.

Dear Parents

2021 has been a very challenging year for us all, but we have reached the end of the academic year.

We express our gratitude to the staff that have rallied together throughout the year and have worked tirelessly in the interest of all of our learners.

We extend our gratitude to the

parents of the school for your support.

We appreciate your payment of fees in these very difficult times and for the interest that you show in the school and your son or daughter's education.

We are also indebted to our School Governing Body members who give much of their time and expertise to the school.



ABOVE: The Head Prefects for 2021/22 were announced at Prizegiving. Congratulations to Matthew Basson (Head Boy), Kendall Krige (Head Girl), Sisipho Arnols (Deputy Head Boy) and Asa Matross (Deputy Head Girl).

News from Term 4

Staff Matters

We are grateful to **Mrs Lehesta Galloway** who has taught Afrikaans FAL in Grades 8 and 9 since May. We wish Mrs Galloway much happiness and peace in her retirement.

We also say farewell to **Ms Bethia Feldon** who has assisted in an internship position. Ms Feldon has accepted a full-time post in Rustenburg.

We wish **Ms Antonet Louw** much happiness as she relocates to East London to take up a position at Merrifield College. We are grateful to Ms Louw for her commitment to our sports programme and to her hockey team.

In terms of a presidential youth-employment initiative, the following have been appointed as Educator Assistants at the school from 1 November 2021 to 31 March 2022: **Educator Assistants:** Ms Lineo Kekana, Ms Nicole de Bruyn, Mr Ronwan Peterson, Ms Mekylé Cochrane and Ms Louise Randall.

Ms Nolitha Ndlazi filled the substitute History post and will continue to do so until 31 January 2022.

Ms Linda Rowe has accepted the Grade 8-9 Afrikaans post from 1 January 2022.

Mr Calvin Beck has been appointed as Sports Administrator/Hockey Professional from 1 January 2022. We look forward to Mr Beck taking our hockey and sport forward.

Timetabling and School Attendance 2022

The Department of Education has given no indication as to whether the Covid-19 protocols will continue in the new year.

We have, therefore, planned for normal schooling with a normal timetable, where all learners come to school daily.

- More information about this will be communicated to you once we have received instruction from the Department of Education.

Top Academic Achievers

At the recent Prizegiving ceremony, the top academic achievers in each grade were acknowledged for excellence during the academic school year. The learners who claimed the top spot in each respective grade, are (as seen below): Erin Gedult (1st on Year Grade 8), Katelyn Trollip (1st On Year Grade 7), Caitrin Spence (1st on Year Grade 10), James Rose-Innes (1st on Year Grade 12), Matthew Basson (1st on Year Grade 11), Na'eem Mohammad (1st on Year Grade 9), Anna Stocks (1st On Year Grade 6) and Antonia Adams (1st on year Grade 5).



ABOVE: Based on their Social Sciences report marks, 10 learners were invited to attend the annual **Grade 7 Social Sciences excursion**. Held as an academic enrichment activity, the excursion saw the learners visit the farms Westbrook, Grootvlei and Onbedacht in the Camdeboo Conservancy on Friday and Saturday, 5 and 6 November. The learners had a fantastic time exploring the farms and especially enjoyed the short hike to a huge poplar forest on Onbedacht farm, where they examined the health of the river by looking for frogs and crabs.

Matric Dinner

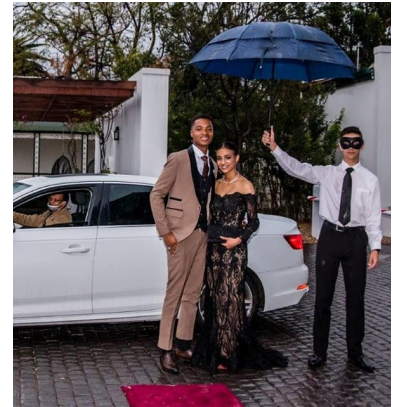
The Matric Class of 2021 enjoyed their matric dinner at the end of the third term.

Held at the Drostdy Hotel on Wednesday, 29 September, the elegant affair saw learners pull out all the stops to look their finest.

Themed 'Masquerade', the venue

was decorated in black and gold and the learners being treated to a beautifully prepared 3-course meal, during which the headmaster and head prefects shared a few words with the Grade 12s.

Some members of staff also joined to celebrate the matrics, what they have accomplished, and the friendships and bonds they have formed over the years.



Valedictory



On Wednesday morning, 20 October, we celebrated a very special occasion with the Grade 12s of 2021 - their final school event, their Valedictory ceremony. This year's outgoing Head Girl, Hannah Watermeyer, led the devotion, whereafter the Headmaster gave an address in which he acknowledged the contributions made by the Grade 12 learners over the past 12 years, commending them on their commitment, resilience, courage and strength. This was followed by the Valedictory speech, delivered by the outgoing Head Boy, Kyle-Luke du Preez, in which he paid a moving tribute to the staff as well as to his fellow prefects and classmates. In his characteristically humble yet confident manner, he highlighted much of what it means to be a Unionite and encouraged his peers to stay true to themselves as they move out into the world. The ceremony ended with the Grade 12s leading out, walking through a guard of honour created by the school's learner body and ringing the Centenary Bell to symbolically bring their time at Union to an end as they took leave of the school.

Prefects

Our prefects for 2021/22 attended their prefect camp over the weekend of 15 to 17 October. The camp was held in the heart of Addo at the 'Leaders in Life' outdoor education centre. Accompanied by Mrs Nelia Read and Mr Hanno Sparrius, our learner leaders spent the weekend doing fun-filled activities geared towards fostering the development of key skills such as confidence, self-belief, communication and team spirit.



Eisteddfod

Despite yet another disruptive year, the cultural activities of the School continued in the background. The **highlight of the year** was certainly the more than 100 learners who participated in 82 items for the Karoo Eisteddfod in the categories of Music, Art, Drama, Speech, Photography and Creative Writing.

We are grateful to our educators, Ms Jenny Street, Mrs Hanli Rose-Innes, Mrs Bronwen Langmead, Mrs Sanette Brink, Ms Zelda van Rooyen and Miss Paula-Jane Phillips, who prepared and entered the learners in the different categories.

Our learners did exceptionally well, with marks ranging from Triple Gold to Silver. Not one learner received a result of less than 70%.

Grade 10 Odyssey

Our Grade 10 class participated in their 5-day **ODYSSEY** from 24 to 28 September. The aim of the Odyssey is that youngsters are 'planted' into the wilderness and taught the skills to survive and grow with all they need, carried in their backpacks - "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" - as Tennyson writes in his poem "Ulysses". The instruction to the Grade 10s was to make their way downstream, walking the 63km from Nieu-Bethesda to Graaff-Reinet.

Early that Friday morning, 58 excited Grade 10s, bid their parents farewell and were transported to Nieu-Bethesda by Union's bus drivers. After a debriefing by Mr and Mrs Langmead, the group set off on the adventure of a lifetime.

The 12km descent to the Graaff-Reinet basin began with a moment of reflection when Mr Langmead asked everyone to pause and consider how light they felt without their packs.

He likened this to leaving any pain that they might still be carrying at the top of that same hill. The descent to school on the last day was filled with lightness and laughter where everyone was met by fellow Unionites and parents who welcomed them with pride and jubilation - memories of



previous Odysseys came to the fore, and excitement for those yet to experience theirs was tangible.

We are grateful to parents Mr Brian Kenmuir, Mr Kallie Venter and Mrs Lisa Watermeyer - Mrs Watermeyer having given 6 years to Odyssey - who walked with the group, and Ms Zakkiyah Mahomed and Mr Shuab Mohammed who assisted with food. It was wonderful to have staff Mrs Cathy Pringle, Ms Paula Phillips and Mrs Bronwen Langmead walk alongside the Grade 10s and get to know them out of the classroom environment.

The school is also grateful to Mrs Shell, Mrs Liebenberg and Mrs Burger who assisted with admin and finances.

And lastly, our grateful thanks to Mr David Langmead, whose vision of Odyssey as a gift to our children and our planet is realized each time he makes one possible.



ABOVE: **Congratulations** to Taegen Hamid, Grade 7, who recently passed her Rockschooll Grade 2 Contemporary Piano practical examination with distinction (90%).

Prizegiving

This year, it was possible to host both a Junior and Senior Prizegiving, although no parents were permitted. The occasions were fitting recognition for the learners who have excelled in a variety of disciplines this year, despite the difficulties of the year. We congratulate all those who received prizes.



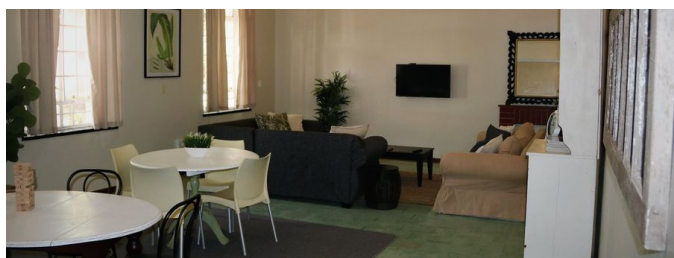
RIGHT: **The Philosophy Club** has created a space where our learners can immerse themselves in big questions and play with a universe of ideas. Congratulations to the outgoing facilitators, James Rose-Innes and Max Wright, and the facilitators for 2022, Simankele Soyana and Sobuhle Nyambali.



Boarding House Matters

Congratulations to **Mrs Mandy Sparks** who has been appointed as Senior Matron at Arthur Kingwill House from 1 January 2022. We look forward to Mrs Sparks making a significant contribution to our senior boarding house.

A lounge area with a flat-screen television and DSTV access, recreational tables, indoor games, puzzles and reading materials to suit various needs are some of the facilities Union's Grade 8 to 11 female boarders are able to access at the **new 'girls common room'** at Arthur Kingwill House. Located in what was once the Prue Murray Sick Bay, the room was recently converted into a recreational space for exclusive use by the boarding establishment's girls and opened to learners at the start of this term. This new room offers the perfect platform for learners to interact with one another and relax with a movie or a game or two.



The new girls' common room at AK House.

RIGHT: Brothers Mark and Ben Lemke represented the School on Saturday, 6 November, at the EP **Biathlon** League 3 event in Gqeberha. Both boys gave it their best on the track and in the pool, enjoying a strong finish, with Ben winning the swimming event and Mark coming in third.



ABOVE: On 5 November, six Union teams participated in Hoër Volkskool's **night relay**. The challenge was to run a 5 kilometre relay route through their school grounds. The spirited learners had a great time and we congratulate them all on participating and thank them for their enthusiasm, team spirit and for giving it their best!

Tennis News

Congratulations to Grade 8 learner **Tara Ferreira** on winning the Girls u14 division at the recent Nelson Mandela Bay Mini 7 tennis singles competition contested in Gqeberha.

PICTURED BELOW: Junior tennis players Misha Newton, Mia Botha, Leigh-Anne Murray and Anna Stocks participated in the **2021 Jocelynn Marais Tennis Tournament** held on 29 and 30 October, in Graaff-Reinet. The girls enjoyed a wonderful weekend of tennis, competing against their Cradock, Stirling, Worcester and Collegiate counterparts. The girls enjoyed mixed results, ending 6th in the tournament overall. A special word of congratulations to Misha Newton, who won 3 out of her 4 singles encounters.



Art Club

The members of the Art Club enjoyed an excursion to the Hester Rupert Art Gallery Graaff Reinet during which they were shown some of the national treasures that are exhibited in this gallery, including original works by Irma Stern, Maggie Laubser, Alexis Preller and Walter Battis. The young artists looked at works from various art movements such as Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealism and Post Modernism.

They also saw works in different mediums including oil paint, watercolour, sculpture and various printing techniques.



Senior Cricket Festival

We are excited to announce that we will be hosting our **15th Annual Senior Cricket Festival** at the start of 2022, from 12 to 15 January. We look forward to welcoming Daniël Pienaar Technical High School, Marlow Agricultural High School, Queen's College Boys' High School, Stirling High School, East London, Edgemead High School, Milnerton High School and Nico Malan to our campus for four days of competitive cricket in an environment that promotes collegiality, friendship and camaraderie.

The team that will be representing Union High School as its 1st XI during this festival, consists of:



Other Cricket News

Congratulations to **Hlaki Skepe** who received his 1st Team Cricket Cap on Friday afternoon, 15 October, prior to a T20 encounter against Otto du Plessis.

We congratulate the following cricketers on being selected for the **Karoo u17 cricket team**: Sisipho Arnols (capt), Brent Hesselink, Shaakir Kazi, Jordan Wilmot, Joshua Horne, Laythan Carelse, Hlaki Skepe and Thokozani Mpanza.

Congratulations to cricketers, Sisipho Arnols, Hlaki Skepe and Shaakir Kazi on being selected for the 2021 **EP Rural Inlands u/17 Team**. We wish them the best of luck when they compete in the CSA Rural Week (12 to 17 December 2021) at Kearsney College in Durban.



Sisipho Arnols, Hlaki Skepe and Shaakir Kazi.

Rugby

During October, **Thokozani Mpanza**, Grade 9, captained the Sarah Baartman District's u15 rugby team during a sevens tournament hosted in East London. Thokozani enjoyed a very successful tournament and was subsequently selected for the Eastern Province u15 sevens rugby team that will travel to Johannesburg in December 2021 to participate in the Summer Games.



Thokozani Mpanza.



ABOVE: On 19 October, Union participated in an u/13 rugby tournament hosted by Volkskool at the Botanics Sports Grounds. The **#RugbyMetRede** event - in aid of the Pink Trees for Pauline initiative - saw an exciting fun-filled day of sevens rugby from the young guns.

Six-A-Side Hockey



All the learners, from Grade 5 through to Grade 12 – boys and girls - had the opportunity to participate in the 6-A-Side hockey tournament this term. A total of nine junior teams and nine senior teams entered. The games were played in a round-robin competition format throughout the course of the afternoon.

Clothing Shop Hours

The Clothing Shop will be open on 17 and 18 January 2022 from 08:00 - 16:00. From Wednesday, 19 January 2022 normal operating hours will apply, i.e., daily from 8am – 1pm. Entrance to the clothing shop will be strictly via the Union High School main gate and reception in Donkin Street. Please note that all Covid 19 protocols will have to be adhered to. Second hand clothing will be accepted but credit will not be processed until the 3rd week of the term.

RIGHT: The Union Schools backpack is available from the school's clothing shop, at R650 each.



My School Card Project

In terms of the My School Card initiative, we are the top-earning school in the Eastern Cape and I thank our many parents who go to the trouble of supporting the school in this way.

There is a link on the OUA website where any member of the public can download application forms to support the school via the My School Card project. Please do register in support of the school.

Tablet Technology

The use of tablets is compulsory for all Grade 8-12 learners in 2022.

No sim cards are allowed in tablets during school time. Tablet slingbags are available at UHS Clothing Shop. Please see the school web-site for tablet specifications.

Cellphones

All parents should take note that teenagers are increasingly using cellphones for other than their intended purpose.

The National Department of Education is becoming increasingly concerned by the anti-social material, particularly of a pornographic nature, some of which is particularly unsavoury and vicious, which learners are circulating.

This is completely unacceptable to the school. Cellular phones are **not permitted** at school and we accept no responsibility for lost or stolen cellular phones.

Phones must be handed in at the secretaries' office for safe-keeping if they must be brought to school. Any cellular phones found at school, whether being used or not, **will be confiscated**.

Uniform

Please be advised that the School runs the Clothing Shop as a service for parents, and as such it is run as a non-profit enterprise. The reason for this is to ensure the best possible uniform prices for parents. There will be times when suppliers let us down and certain items are unavailable to parents. This is often beyond our control, and I ask parents to be understanding of this. We are also unable to carry large amounts of stock as this would cause cash flow problems for further purchases. It is also difficult to publish both summer and winter pricelists on social platforms as these prices become outdated within a few months. However, we will make these available with a footnote reflecting the prices being subject to change.

Grade 8 Orientation 2022

The Grade 8 Orientation Day will take place on Thursday 20 January at the Camdeboo Outdoor Education Centre to focus on welcoming these learners into the high school for 2022.

Annual General Meeting

At the meeting held on 8 November the proposed budgets and fees for 2022 were approved by parents present. A detailed list of the fees can be found included in the finance letter to be distributed with the report cards.

You're Invited!

Members of the Union community are invited to attend the FOUNDERS WEEKEND 2022 celebrations on Friday and Saturday, 28 and 29 January 2022. The event will mark the founding of Union High School 102 years ago.

Grounds and Buildings

When Union's athletes take to the school's tennis courts to start off the 2022 season, they will be playing on beautiful, newly reconstructed, playing surfaces. The **resurfacing of the school's tennis courts** commenced on Wednesday, 17 November, and soon they will be in great shape again, ready to serve the school community.

In order to **improve security** of the school campus, along with all the educators, staff and learners, the school has recently embarked on a project that will see the school's perimeter fence along the riverbank replaced with secure palisade fencing.

Outdoor learning isn't a new concept. Educators have long enjoyed taking their learners outside for lessons and teaching in the outdoors.

Construction recently began on our first designated **outdoor classroom** space, which will be ready for use at the start of the 2022 academic year.

The space will be fully equipped to move indoor learning outside without sacrificing the necessary resources to teach or the comfort of learners.



Book Shop

The book shop will NOT be open at the start of 2022 for collection of text books as these will be distributed in class to Grade 5-7. All cash payments of the e-book levies (see enclosed Tablet Technology letter in report envelopes) can be paid on Monday and Tuesday, 17 and 18 January 2022 respectively in the Foyer from 08:00 – 16:00.

Absenteeism/ Leaving School Early

Learners should not miss school unnecessarily. It is important that you provide the school with a note whenever your son/daughter is absent from school for whatever reason (medical or otherwise) in order to assist the school in monitoring unwarranted absenteeism.

Remember also that should a scholar miss school for any reason whatsoever, the onus is upon the scholar to catch up work and to ensure that he/she is fully informed regarding what is or has been expected of him.

The same applies should there be a need for your child to leave school early. Please note that no learner may leave school during the school day without having reported to the office.

These requirements are to assist us in monitoring our scholars to ensure that they do not leave school without parents' and the school's knowledge. It would be appreciated if arrangements in this regard could be made in advance.

Important 1st Term Dates

12 – 15 January: UHS 15th Annual Senior Cricket Festival

17 January: Term starts for teachers at 08:00

18 January: New Parents' Tea in the Tony Burrell Union at 11:00
Grade 5 Parents' Meeting at 11:30 in Room 20
Grade 8 Parents' Meeting at 11:30 in the Lecture Room

19 January: Term starts for Learners
School times 07:05 – 13:30 daily

21 January: Academic Awards Assembly in the School Hall at 07:05

28 January: Founders' Day Assembly 11:00

29 January: Founders' Weekend Sport

25 March: School closes for Term 1

In Conclusion

I thank you all most sincerely for your tremendous support this year and trust that you will have a blessed time with your children over the Festive Season.

Yours faithfully,



MR W.E. PRINGLE
HEADMASTER



To our Matric Class of 2021: We aimed to give you the knowledge, skills and wisdom you need in life. We hope that the education you gained here will help you with your future careers, so you can continue to achieve excellence and reach new heights. Your journey with the school may end here but the chapters for the rest of your life have only just begun! Set your goals high and dream big! Make mistakes, learn from them and unlock your potential! We wish you farewell, **GO BRAVELY INTO THE FUTURE.**

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat." — **Theodore Roosevelt**
