

Oakhill Old Oaks

June 2013



Our new land continues to take shape and form.

“Think highly of yourself, for the world takes you at your own estimate.”

-Unknown

From the desk of Barbie Leibbrandt

Dear Oaks of Old – past Students, Staff and Parents,

It is time to spread my wings and fly!

Oakhill is in such a fine place, has never been finer, and this has given me good reason to entrust my long-lived passion of 18 years to those monitoring the “engine room” and resign my position and immerse myself in chasing my dream – a dream to open a “Cheer Up Shop” in Knysna, where folk can stop by to browse awhile, smile awhile, chat awhile and purchase some happiness, to keep, or to pass on to someone else, enabling that happiness to spread. Just thinking about it fills me with joy and excitement. So, dear friends, an enormous leap of faith for me, but I shall never be far, and frequent visits to this happy Oakhill campus will definitely be on my agenda. I shall need my “fix” of hugs from time to time! Shane has also asked me to stay connected and drive the Old Oaks process for the time being, so yes, I will be around every corner!

I am happy to report that since my communication in March, I have had some wonderful responses from you, our Oaks of Old - our Old Oaks' mailing list is growing. It gives me great satisfaction and immense pleasure when an Oak of Old steps into Reception,

beams broadly, turns to her husband, looks lovingly at her son of almost a year and informs Elna and I that she wishes to start the application process. It's one of those priceless moments for me, because I know, that they know, that their choice of school is the right choice. Of this I have no doubt. This was the case, a couple of weeks ago when Graeme and Megan van Rensburg (néé Förg) popped in for a chat and a walkabout. I needed no encouragement, shared with them just as it is, encouraged Megan to encourage her circle of friends to contact us and invited them to attend our next Little Oaks' Experience Day on the 27th August and our annual Teddy Bear's Picnic on the 7th September.

And then last Friday, as I enjoyed watching some Prep Father's Day Soccer interaction on the astro and top field, I noticed a good looking young man, but definitely not a “Dad” that I recognised. You see, I do know them all, but also need to take into consideration that when you get to 60, it does become challenging! It was then that Guy Jacobs sidled up to me, shared that his dear Holly had recently given birth to their third child (they've called him Jax) and then proceeded to



The 2013 Matric hoodie proudly displays names of our students; College break times spent in the warm sunshine.

share with me that the good looking chap was David Correia, who has just recently returned to Knysna. After the match, B-A Hayward and I hugged and welcomed David "home". What a pleasure! I still remember David for his amazing fine art sketches – he struck me then, way back in 1998 when he matriculated, as a seriously talented artist. I also remember finding him sitting quietly outside our admin office (now the Clothing Shop / Tuckshop) late one afternoon, with art folder in hand and offering him a lift into town. David is home, and as with Guy, who is giving back to Oakhill, coaching hockey, I am sure that David will share his creative expertise with Oakhill too. In his words: "It would be fantastic to speak to Shane and yourself about how I could possibly be involved with the school on some level, as it really resonates with me, probably because I enjoyed it so much as a pupil – don't think many people can say that about their school years".



David Correia and Guy Jacobs remembering when...

I received a vimeo link this past week to a short video that David shot at the Prep Father's Day Soccer morning – a wonderful, simple exposure to an Oakhill event, just as we do it, with care and joy. You may find the link to this on our website – simply scroll to "Old Oaks."

I was on my way to work the other morning when dear ex Oakhill Mom, Irene Pott (now Irene Cowley) phoned me. She was bubbling with delight and had every reason to do so. She shared that Alistair (Matric 2000) had been approached by Google and would be joining them at



Our Matric Class of 2013

Head Office in San Francisco next month. On contacting Alistair, and being Alistair, he played it down and I share his response:

"Yeah, Jules and I are very excited about the move both to San Francisco and to Google. I'm joining the Google Android team as a Product Manager but can't really talk more about the details -- they're a secretive group! We have UCT friends living in SF so that will be really great for us".

I think that my Mom is exaggerating a little when she says "head hunted". It's true that they approached me but it certainly didn't feel like being head hunted. :) They put me through certainly the most intense interviews of my life. Somehow I scraped through and off we go!

I'm attaching a photo of the two of us from a recent(ish) trip to San Francisco with the Golden Gate Bridge in the background.



You keep reaching for the stars, young man, and we'll delight in tracking your take off!

I had promised my most favourite Oakhill Mom, Justine Edwards, who creates the appeal to the text, that

the June edition would be short and sweet. Forgive me Justine, there is just so much to share.

After months of to and fro, our next bus wrap is about to take shape. I cannot wait to see the finished product. I have sent Justine a sneak preview and am sure she will include the visuals for you. Theri, Wayne, Julio, Caspar – you look awesome!

I had not been out to the new sports campus for months on end (Justine has kept track of progress and fed me with photographs every month) and decided a few weeks ago to ask my brother, Phil, to accompany me. He is also employed at Oakhill. I was astounded! The access road is no longer a "bumpity-bump" and the grass is growing and the cricket pitches are in preparation and Phil tells me that the fields had their first trim last week. If you are in the area, perhaps for the Knysna Oyster Festival, do yourself a favour, head down Welbedacht Road and view the magnificent transformation. And if you feel inclined and feel that you might like to make a donation to this amazing project, please contact me and I will point you in the right direction. I bet you wish that you were still at Oakhill!

Before I sign off, I would like to share a few snippets, received from folk since my last communication and since we celebrated our coming of age. Here goes:

From Allan and Dal Graham:

"We will always remember our



wonderful visit, the kindness of everybody and the joy of seeing a really happy school. Diana commented on our return to CT that she would dearly love to put Natalie in Oakhill!! (a little far from CT!) I felt that that said it all!

Much love to you all and again we will cherish our memories of our visit.

A letter to Anthony Robinson (Miles – Matric 2007 / Wesley – Matric 2010) from Dotti Rakau:

Hello Anthony

I trust you are well. Firstly I would like to apologise for replying very late to your email. I have been really busy lately. Thanks so much for your lovely email. Thank you for your kind words. I am honoured that people came up to you and spoke such wonderful comments about me. It was an absolute pleasure to speak about my experience studying at Oakhill School, where my formal education began. I will never forget Oakhill School, it will always be a part of me. I am grateful to all my ex teachers who put so much work and effort into my education for me to matriculate. I say this with tears in my eyes! I bless them all.



Dotti Rakau with Amy Nuttal

I bump into dear Dotti regularly and what a pleasure. She is making a

significant difference in the Knysna community. She appears on Knysna FM regularly, she is doing voluntary work at the Hlalani pre-school Crèche and she is very involved with the Emmanuel Ministry, helping and teaching young children and teenagers to face the challenges of life. They say that dynamite comes in small packages!

An e-mail from Ryan Matthews (first Matric group – 1994)

You are obviously a real character, Ryan! Jamie has moved on, but believe it or not, his eldest daughter, Janine, who attended Oakhill for a good few years and who studied at Rhodes University, is coming to do a prac teaching session at Oakhill next term. You see, they do come “home”!

Thanks for the newsletter. I'm sorry we couldn't make the trip to be at the celebration, sounds like it would have been great fun, and interesting to see how things have developed.

I was one of the first matrics (one of the 18) and the reference to Jamie Fearon bringing in road kill for biology lessons made me laugh. I vividly remember the time when Jamie brought in a Genet cat that had been knocked down - Jamie said by another car! So he went about cutting the poor thing open and navigating us around the different organs during our lesson. When it came to revealing the lungs he thought he would demonstrate how they expand and contract with air. So he shoved a pipe connected to a gas bottle down the victim's throat and opened the tap. Now imagine 18 curious matrics all over the chairs and desks peering over the body to get a close up view of the lungs about to expand. Well the lungs stayed where they were and instead the stomach started blowing up like a balloon! Well that sent everybody scrambling for cover as we all anticipated getting covered in whatever putrid juices the thing stored in its belly.

Luckily the stomach proved to be

quite flexible and Jamie managed to turn off the gas just in time to avert a rather nasty explosion.

What a great memory! That classroom was a fantastic place to learn.

There were tortoises, all kinds of plants, loads of bottled specimens, even little chickens were hatched in that room. I'm not sure if Jamie is still teaching there, but if not, I hope there still is a biology room where the kids can watch nature live, not only in books and movies. Cheers.

An e-mail received from Antoinette Bouchet, Gwylim (Matric 2009) and Cicely (Matric 2012) Ashley's Mom:

Just to update you on Gwylim. He is busy with maths honours at UCT. He completed a three month internship with Facebook in California and was offered a full time job at the end of the year, so that's where he'll be going. Cicely is doing a gap year in Vancouver.

An e-mail from Leonie Baynes – Chloe Baynes (Matric 2010):

Good to hear from you. Just as a matter of interest ... our rebel Chloe has done exceptionally well in her studies at Granger Bay Hotel School and will be completing her course in June. To date she has been ranked amongst the top students in her class and has been elected to do her final practical internship at St Andrews Country Club in Florida, Miami. Not bad for a girl who used to drive everybody at Oakhill round the bend! Hee, Hee! I must admit, seeing her in her uniform, complete with stockings and court shoes, she could qualify as an airhostess. I never thought she was geared for this, bearing in mind that even Oakhill's "relaxed" uniform was impossible for her to comply with. However, she gives Oakhill all the credit for her successes today, and believes if it had not been for the support and understanding of her complex personality and the belief everybody had in her (and the patience) she probably would not

have excelled as she has. Well done Oakhill!

And well done Chloe! Thank you for the chuckle, Leonie.

An e-mail from Alison Myburgh – Angus Myburgh (Matric 2009)

I have been living in Moscow since October 2011 and am having a great time - working for the rich and not so famous .. .the odd Oligarch, bodyguards and all!

Angus completed his BSc at Stellenbosch, was accepted for Honours, but decided to take a gap year...at present living with a bunch of Expats in Moscow and working as a private tutor. (Maths and English) He completed the CELTA and plans to continue studying in 2014.

An e-mail from Franco De Grandis: Paolo (Matric 1996); Alessandro (Matric 1999); Roberta (Matric 2002); Stefano

(Matric 2007) :

We have two bits of news that you may want to follow up.

First of all, Paolo and his wife, Hilary, had a baby daughter called Giuliana on the 16th Feb – a new Oakhill baby.

Paolo graduates with an MBA from Wits University on the 29th June. He first graduated at UCT in 2002 where he received his BSc Business Science.

He works at Ernst and Young in Johannesburg. He is at paolodegrandis@gmail.com

An e-mail from Roberta Eggers (né De Grandis)

Thanks for the e-mail. My husband and I have finally finished the renovation on our house (not sure if I mentioned it to you at the 21st party) and it has been a long gruelling process. What a huge relief. Now I'm back looking for conventional work.

It was good to see you at the 21st Dinner,
Rob.

A quick update from Rhian Palmer (néé Berning) – Matric 1994



Living happily back in Plett with husband Stuart Palmer and children Anela and Zanda. My new 'ecopreneurial' project, Eco Atlas,



Our new buses featuring Old Oaks Caspar Lee, Julio Muller, Wayne Craig and Theri Rossouw.

recently went national at the 2013 Indaba in Durban with positive national and international interest and I'm so excited that this online ethical guide for conscious consumers and travellers is taking flight. Empowering people to make informed decisions about where to eat, stay and play with a conscience is so rewarding. Oakhill encouraged me to be passionate about having a voice and having a choice and having an earthly conscience, thank you.

Here's a link for the article in the CX Press about Eco Atlas going national.
<http://www.cxpress.co.za/default.asp?pid=Environmental&draft=>

Thank you so much for sharing this wonderful news. That's why we love to track our Oaks of Old – you are an amazing Lady, Rhian – yet another marvellous Oakhill success story.

More amazing news – this time from Stefanie Seydack – Maren Seydack (Matric 2011)

Well, Maren enjoys studying and living in Freiburg. She's been roped in to volunteer at the 'teddy clinic': Every year second year medical students become 'teddy docs'. The university erects a big tent and invites pre-school children to bring their teddy's so the 'doctors' can treat them. The project aims to take the 'white coat fear' from children plus teaches the future doctors to work with children. The idea comes from America but is adapted world-wide. There is even an ambulance – just in case one of the teddy's needs to be rushed to hospital and they stage a bicycle accident where the ambulance including personnel rushes to their aid. There will be a tent with a theatre too where operations will take place. By now it's so popular that teachers have to book a slot for their classes..... you can check it out under
http://www.ofamed.de/teddybaer_krankenhaus/galerie/teddy2012.htm

A snippet from Marc da Motta

(Matric 2005)

Well, I'm currently working in London as a copywriter for an advertising agency. The hours are long but the work is very rewarding. Not as exciting as Hong Kong was, but England makes for a great base to see the rest of Europe. Flights are fairly cheap and accommodation (if you're not too fussy) can also be pretty cheap. The career is going strong, and I am happy here, although one day in the future I do hope to return to South Africa to head up my own advertising agency.

I still play soccer, but nowhere near the same amount that I used to at school, which is unfortunate.

It is such a treat to hear from Oaks of Old – the memories keep tumbling down! Thank you so much.

This was such a treat as well – also triggered so many memories! Mitchell Williams (Matric 2005)

Greetings from Ken & Mandy Williams in the UK!

We are all well over here, miss the wonderful weather and people of SA but doing our best to look on the bright side!



I just thought I would drop you a line after receiving your email and letting you know that Mitchell is now engaged! He came over here back in 2007 for a "gap" year, met a lovely

Polish girl, fell in love and last year in September, he proposed whilst they were paragliding in the Greek Isles!! No wedding date yet as they have a dilemma of which country to get married in - South Africa, Poland or UK! I have attached a recent photograph taken of them at Twickenham Rugby Stadium when we went to watch some rugby.

Danielle is also currently living here in the UK, however she is due to move to New York later this year on a 2-3 year contract. She has been modelling for the past 7 years which has enabled her to travel extensively. I have also attached a recent photograph of her and her boyfriend (British) who will be moving to New York with her. He is not a model but fortunately has also arranged a 2 year contract via his company (IT) - so they can go on this adventure together.

Ken and I are well, getting older, but hey that's life!

We dearly miss Knysna and all its people and hope that we can visit again sometime in the near future.

An e-mail from Stella Sohn – Mitchell Sohn (Matric 2011)

If you want to know what my boys are up to ... Jamie has qualified as a Swedish Holistic Masseur and Reiki Master and runs his little practice from our guest house at Narnia - a real home boy!

Last year Mitch did day work on luxury boats in Antibes, Monaco, Cannes in France and San Remo in Italy, came back to work at a hunting camp in Namibia and worked till the end of the year for Shipwreck Furniture in Knysna, learning to make furniture and marketing for them. He is a "smous" of note - last year he sold R380 000 worth of stuff for various people on the net, earning himself commission! Last month I took him and his girlfriend, Catherine, to Spain and France for a few weeks and left them to look for

work in Antibes on the boats, where they have already found day work at the Grand Prix!



College students at break

An e-mail update from Cathy Henderson: Sarah Henderson (Matric 2011)

Just a bit of feedback about Sarah, who is studying a Bachelor of Social Work at UCT. She is in her second year now and has been sworn in as a Social Worker, as she has to be evaluated on the practical side this year.

For the first semester, she visited an 84 year old lady in an Old Age Home in Claremont. She visited once a week and then handed in her report to be marked. She had a lovely lady to work with and had a very successful and enriching experience. Next semester she has chosen to work at Groote Schuur Hospital for her practical. I had hoped she would choose to work in a school but she really wants to work "hands on" with people in need.

Another successful "Pott Story" (You did a good job Irene!): Jacqui Pott (Matric 2005)

Sorry it took me a while to respond,

but better late than never I guess!

Things are going very well for me. I am in my final year of Accounting Articles at Investec. I am currently working in the Corporate and Institutional Banking division, focusing on Aviation Finance. I also recently passed my final Board exam (coming 10th in the country). I've attached the electronic copy of the Accounting South Africa magazine that features a profile on me (page 55).



As winner of the 2010 South African Tourism Welcome Awards, as well as runner up for the World Travel Awards in 2009-12 for best African Conservation Company, we are very proud of what we do. Our ethos is one of empowerment, and this is evident in every project that we undertake.

ROBERT PECHL, NEDBANK.

Why you chose the CASA route? I was always interested in accounting and wanted to work in a challenging option in the business field. I knew I would give more benefit somewhere to myself and others.

How did you prepare for the exam? I looked for key themes recurring in the papers and tried to create a set of frameworks to use in answering these themes. I also created a mind map to structure my answers in the exams. I also worked with a tutor.

What support did you get from your company? Nedbank provided a great environment to study. I also worked in challenging roles in the treasury department, Equity Derivatives and Prime Banking, and I also enjoyed my front office and accounting experience. They provided a lot of knowledge and a strong support base going into the exams.

JACQUI POTT, UNIVERSITEC BANK

Why you chose the CASA route? I wanted to work in a challenging, job security and interesting field. I also wanted to work in something that I could be passionate about and that I could be interested in. I also wanted to learn more about the industry and how it works.

How did you prepare for the exam? I completed a CASA course at the University of Cape Town before starting the main and ensured that I applied my mind to all the subjects.

What support did you get from your company? They held a full day revision workshop at the office where we were given practice papers and feedback on our answers. We were also given study leave and, if needed, more support.

How is this achievement going to change your life? Passing QF II has put me another step closer to my goal of becoming a Chartered Accountant. It has also given me a qualification that will become available to me. Also, achieving a result in the top tier of the class has given me a great sense of pride, hard work and dedication, as well as an affirmation of my abilities.

The Shoprite Group would like to congratulate our Trainee Accountants for achieving a 100% pass rate for us in the SAICA QE II.



Shoprite provides **Chartered Accounting articles training and fantastic opportunities** for aspiring Chartered Accountants.

grow with us! **SHOPRiTE** GROUP OF COMPANIES

Last but not least – a thrilling story from Dayne Davey (Matric 2000)

EDGE of AFRICA was started by Dayne Davey in 2006. As an organisation we rely entirely on international and local students and volunteers on school holidays, gap year programs, career breaks or university internships as the driving force behind our community and conservation initiatives. Our award winning projects originated in Knysna, South Africa, where we have been developing the EDGE Academy, aimed at inspiring local children to achieve, driving economically viable business empowerment models and working with local communities to conserve our natural heritage.

Our "Swop Swop", for example, encourages children to collect recycling material, which they can then exchange for tokens that they can use to purchase items of clothing, stationery and toiletries in our 'shop'. We facilitate various support groups including a young girls' and boys' group and a pregnant mothers' group, all based around educational topics and encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle. We are also undertaking a number of workshops centred on nutrition, animal welfare, HIV & AIDS education and homework assistance.

If you are interested in getting involved as a volunteer, we are always looking for extra hands. We are also looking for individuals who are interested in offering free lectures or training sessions to unemployed adults. If you can't find time to assist, donations of children's clothing, toiletries and stationery are always needed, as are various items of recycling for the business empowerment project.

The opportunity also exists for students 16+ who are interested in



Jackie Wilson with daughter Fallon at Little Oaks Children of the World Day

internships in a variety of fields to join our team, make a difference and build a competitive CV. We also have branches in Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Madagascar. Please visit our website www.edgeofafrica.com for more information, or email dayne@edgeofafrica.com if you have any questions.

Another amazing young Lady, with such a big heart. You make us smile, Dayne. You make us proud!

Oakhill has taught me so many lessons – to be humble more, to care more, to love more, to serve more, to be more ... when it comes to Oakhill, there is never a shortage of words – every day offers something to cheer about. I cheer a school that has been an integral part of my life for 18 years,

and an unbelievably exciting and invigorating environment to work in. I have seen Oakhill grow in leaps and bounds, come of age, and I say it again, you can be proud and delighted in your School, our School.

Yours in the spirit of the Joy of Learning,
Barbie



"I put him back!"



Matric Drama students took the college quad by storm - what a fantastic performance!



THE JOY OF LEARNING

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Dear Old Oaks – Please browse our website and Facebook pages for the full photo galleries.

I still find each day too short for all the thoughts I want to think, all the walks I want to take, all the books I want to read, and all the friends I want to see.

- John Burroughs

Please forward your news, snippets and images to
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