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PINELANDS COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 169 | February 2026



Green Veggies with Eggs

Heleen Meyer



Triathlon to Raise Funds

Kathy Leverton



Education & Childcare

Special Feature



Helen Keller

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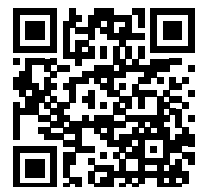
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Max Schutte



Shoebill Stork

Forgive me this month if I indulge in my fantasy bird. One of the most sought after birds, the Shoebill is found in Central and Northern Africa.

Thought to be related to the Pelican, The Shoebill is one of the most unique looking birds, with an enormous mottled grey beak. They move very slowly and can stand still for long periods, before lunging suddenly for food. The head and foreparts of the body are usually submerged during the lunge.

Found mainly in papyrus wetlands, their main food is Lungfish. They are very rare and the pairs have large territories.

Unless I win the lotto, I am unlikely to see one. Alas!!

John McFarlane, author of the regular Muse bird feature enjoys the company of garden birds at his home in Pinewood Village. During his Kruger Park trip in September 2025, he saw one hundred and eleven species of birds. One that stood out was the Kori Bustard. John notes that September is a bit early for migrating birds which only start arriving mid October.



“PREDICTION IS VERY DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY IF IT’S ABOUT THE FUTURE”

We are back... and still the global craziness continues. Rather than try to make sense of it all, or wonder what may happen next, let’s look forward to some big events happening in 2026.

It’s a big year for major sporting events!

- The Winter Olympic Games are in Italy from 6 Feb, followed by the Winter Paralympics from 6 March. Start brushing up on your Curling, Luge, Skeleton and Nordic Combined.
- The ICC Men’s T20 Cricket World Cup starts on 7 Feb in India and Sri Lanka. Can SA add the T20 title to their Test Championship last year?
- The 2026 FIFA World Cup, co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada starts on 11 June. This time, Bafana Bafana will be in the mix. Besides the soccer action there could be some political fireworks as the co-hosts are not the best of mates right now.
- The Commonwealth Games are on again in Glasgow, Scotland from 23 July.

On the astronomical front:

- Soon after 6 Feb, humans are set to make their first return to the Moon since Apollo 17 in 1972 (54 years ago) when NASA’s Artemis 2 launches. The mission doesn’t land on the Moon, but rather tests a novel “free-return trajectory” which slingshots the vessel around the Moon using lunar gravity for one low altitude pass and ensures a return back to Earth without any propulsion from the craft - a cautious restart for “moonshots”.
- The Chinese New Year on 17 Feb ushers in the year of the horse as the snake departs.
- On 12 August there’s a total solar eclipse across Greenland (or USA?), Iceland and Spain.
- It will be “once in a blue moon” on 31 May when we experience a second full moon in one month, an event called a Blue Moon which occurs once every 33 months or so.

We hope you enjoy this edition and we look forward to more musing through the year.

Max Schutte

Editor and Advertising
Max Schutte

Writer and Photographer
Glynnis Schutte

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The Muse reserves the right to select articles for inclusion and to make alterations to submitted contributions.

NEXT EDITION

170 • March 2026

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DEADLINES

Bookings: 9 Feb

Content: 13 Feb

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Fridays 2026 (see dates below)

HELEN KELLER SOCIETY BOOK ROOM AND NURSERY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Helen Keller Society will open their book room and garden nursery for sales to the general public on the last Friday of every month between 10:00 and noon. Call Bev Wroth on 021 531 5311.

Friday: 30 Jan ; 27 Feb; 27 March.

Wednesday 4 February:

HAPPY HOUR SOCIAL GROUP

09:00 - 11:00

Meet at the Pinelands Library activities hall and enjoy an Ikebana demonstration with Cheron Roggen. All welcome.

Call Santa 083 235 6730.

Saturday 7 Feb 2026

PINELANDS METHODIST CHURCH "MARKET ON UNION" 09:00 to noon

New year, but some things don't change. The market is back! Same warm fellowship, same Saturday brunch offerings, same eats and treats – and maybe a new craft stall or two. In the church hall at 2 Union Avenue. Call Joan on 082 810 1889.

Wednesday 11 February

PLANT SWAP 10:00 to 11:00

Calling all plant lovers to share plants, cuttings and seed packs, at Pinelands Library.

Call Verna/Lauren 021 814 1780.

Wed 18 and Thur 19 Feb & Sat 21 Feb SGGGS OPEN DAYS

Visit SGGGS in Richmond Road, Mowbray.

High School (18 - 19 Feb) 15:30 to 17:30.

Primary School (21 Feb) 09:00 to 12:00.

Bookings on www.sggs.co.za.

Wednesday 18 February

PAGE TURNERS BOOK CLUB 10:00 - 11:00.

Come to the Pinelands Library committee room for a book talk with local author, Joëlle Searle, who will be chatting about her book *Odette* - a fictional historical novel inspired by snippets of her parents' lives as young adults in France during World War 2.

Call Verna/Lauren 021 814 1780.

Wednesday 21 February:

CHAPTER CHASERS BOOK CLUB

From 10:00. Join the Pinelands Library Chapter Chasers Book Club for those aged 14 to 19 years. Call Verna/Lauren 021 814 1780, or email pinelands.library@capetown.gov.za.

Wednesday 25 February

PINELANDS STAMP CIRCLE

Meet at 18:30 in the Activities Hall above the Pinelands Library. All Members.

Topic: An Antarctic evening.

Email Martin: m.tristan.crawford@gmail.com.

Fri 27 Feb and Sat 28 Feb

CANNONS CREEK OPEN DAYS

Cannons Creek looks forward to hosting prospective families at its 2026 Open Days, to view the school, meet the teachers, and interact with its pupils. Booking is essential. email marketing@cannonscreek.co.za.

Primary School Open Day

(including Grade RR and Grade R):

Friday 27 February (09h00 – 12h00)

High School Open Day (including Grade 7):

Saturday 28 February (09h00 – 12h00).

Fridays Feb

PINEES PRAM JAM. 10:00 to 10:40

Bring your toddlers from birth to 4 years old to the Pinelands Library Hall for exciting stories and lively music and movement sessions.

Call 021 814 1780.

Saturdays 2026 09:00 to 13:00

BRIC-A-BRAC SALES FOR KAPS

Visit Gloria at the Karoo Animal Protection Society (KAPS) bric-a-brac table at the Pinelands Club. All donations are welcome.

For collection call Gloria 083 450 2782.

Saturdays Feb 2026 10h30

FAMILY BONDING: STORIES AND SMILES

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Send content for the March 2026 edition by 13 February 2026.

Publication will be 24 February 2026. R187 ensures placement

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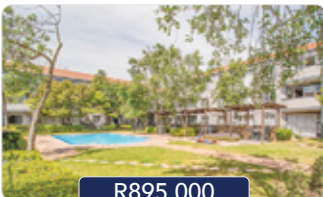
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Rebecca Gray (left) and Madison le Roux (right)



Rebecca Gray playing her final piece accompanied by the CPO

COMMUNITY NEWS

instrumentalists, three saxophonists, two woodwind players and a marimba player. Rebecca, a Grade 10 learner at Rustenburg Girls' High School in Rosebank, progressed to the final round where she performed the Cello Concerto No 1 in A Minor, Op 33 by Camille Saint-Saëns. She played the Allegro non troppo movement to thunderous applause from the packed concert hall. Rebecca stems from a musical family. Mother Cathy is a music teacher. For the cello, she has two teachers – Rina Schutte and Graham du Plessis.

Both Pinelands stars received R2 500 for their performances in the third, while Rebecca earned a further R3 000 for being through to the fourth and final round. As category winner in the strings category, Rebecca earned a silver medal, plus R6 000. She also received a further R5 000 for the best performance of a work by a Russian composer by a string instrumentalist, playing Sergei Prokofiev's Sonata for Cello and Piano in C Major, Op 119 in the first round of the competition.

The overall winners of the competition were pianist Hermanus Schmidt, 17 (gold), pianist Yu Qing Peng, 17 (silver) and marimba player Kyrah Adams, 19 bronze.

The competition winner and final ranking of the NYMC are cumulatively determined over the four rounds by an adjudicating panel consisting of seven renowned musicians and academics. ■

Text from Frikkie Odendaal.

TEEN MUSICIANS DO PINELANDS PROUD

Two Pinelands teens proudly flew the Pinelands flag at the 41st National Youth Music Competition (NYMC) held at the Endler Hall, Stellenbosch, in December 2025. Pianist Madison le Roux, 18, and cellist Rebecca Gray, 15, shone at the contest for classical instrumentalists between the ages of 14 and 19 years. A total of 24 rising stars from all over South Africa were selected to participate in the week-long competition. The contest with prize money of R180 000 is the only music competition in the country where the six finalists do their final battle accompanied by the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra.

The competition is determined over four rounds in five categories, namely piano, string instruments, woodwind instruments,

brass instruments, and other instruments such as percussion, harp, marimba, etc.

All contestants must play in the first two rounds, whereafter 12 are selected to play in the third round. All contestants had to prepare a wide-ranging repertoire of works from different style periods, as well as a South African work.

The top six musicians who went through to the fourth and final round then perform, in competition, at a glittering gala concert with the CPO. Madison, progressed in the competition to the semi-final round, where she had to perform a recital with a minimum duration of 20 minutes, plus playing a 1st or 3rd movement not exceeding 20 minutes. Competition coordinator, Aileen Maas, said there were nine pianists, seven string

Kathy Leverton creates triathlon to raise funds

"I am Kathy Leverton, hiking guide, tea drinker, chocolate muncher, dog lover. I am not a vet, like my two older sisters. Nor did I ever want to be a vet, like my mother. I do occasionally work at a vet practice in reception, but the closest I get to actual vet work is playing with the puppies when they arrive for their vaccinations.

And as much as I love puppies, and kittens, they pose a huge problem in South Africa. There are too many. It is estimated that about 2 800 dogs and cats are euthanased every day in South Africa. Our shelters are overflowing. While there are MANY rescue organisations in South Africa, four in particular have crept into my heart space. So I created a triathlon of sorts for myself to complete within 30 days to raise funds to support their good work.

The three events are:

1. **Robben Island Escape** – swim from Robben Island to Table View. A distance of 7.4 km in water that is about 11 °C. I'm not completely crazy; I will be doing it in the "wetsuit" category.

2. **Cape Town Cycle Tour** – 109 km bike ride around the Cape Peninsula.

3. **Thirteen Peaks** – a challenge created by Ryan Sandes to tag 13 peaks on the Cape Peninsula in a specific order, entirely on foot. I will try to complete the route in four consecutive days. This means distances of 25-30km each day.

The schedule I've set myself is over February – March 2026. The swim will be in February. After that I will move onto the other two challenges. The Cycle Tour is set for 8 March.

So, I will do the hard yards to earn your money for the animals of South Africa. The goal is to raise R20 000 for each charity.



The swim is not cheap as there is a safety boat cost and I need my own wetsuit. If you can help out with the costs of the event as well, that would be greatly appreciated. But if it's a choice, choose the animals!

The four welfare I will be supporting:

Fallen Angels is based close to Cape Town. They look after about 250 dogs and cats on their farm near Melkbos.

Pit Pals is located near Cape Town, and are a rescue dedicated to re-homing bully breeds. My Pondo puppy is a rescued pitbull cross. I have a much greater understanding of "scary" or "aggressive" breeds through owning one. Genetics, environment and training all play a role. Just like for any breed. **Sidewalk Specials** is situated in De Doorns, about two hours outside of Cape Town in a farming community.

The Transkei Animal Welfare Initiative (TAWI) is in the Eastern Cape, located in the area along the coast called Pondoland. TAWI takes language and geographical barriers in their stride and offers vet care to give animals, and their humans, the best life they can."

Donate at BackaBuddy:

backabuddy.co.za/campaign/my-tri-for-tails
For more info email: kath.leverton@gmail.com.

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CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Geneé Rodinis has been exceptional to work with over many years. We purchased our home through her in 2018, and in 2025 she successfully secured a buyer that delivered a gross 45% profit on that investment. Beyond our own transaction, this sale has set a new benchmark and will positively influence market values across Pinelands, reflecting her deep understanding of pricing, timing, and buyer psychology. Throughout, Geneé conducted herself with integrity, clarity, and calm professionalism. We would recommend her without hesitation to anyone buying or selling in Pinelands, Cape Town.



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TRAVELLERS

By Brian Watkyns

The cabin on
Kasmas Island



Brian and Ann
Watkyns with Jill
and Nils Bergman

Kasmas Island in the Swedish Archipelago

Summer Solstice in Sweden

In 2025, Ann and I were fortunate to visit our friends Nils and Jill Bergman in Stockholm and spend four unforgettable days with them on Kasmas-grunden Island, for an authentic summer solstice celebration. In the 1960s, Nils and Jill inherited the rights to Kasmas island as part of the Bergman family legacy. Rights to the individual islands, such as Kasmas, in the Swedish Archipelago, are inherited from forefathers who lived and worked as fishermen on the island. While the land is owned by the state, the sole right to occupy the island passes down the generations. Nils and Jill, family friends, lived in Pinelands until they relocated to Sweden in 2018. (See *Muse Pinelands*, September 2016).

Bus, train and ferry to the island

We flew in with Scandinavian Airlines and spent the night in Tumba, a suburb of Stockholm. The six-hour journey to the island began with a quick walk to the nearby bus stop. Each of our party of four carried a full backpack and pulled a wheeled suitcase, as we had to take all our linen, clothing, food and cleaning supplies. The bus took us to the train station to board a train to the ferry terminal at Stromkaian in front of the Kings's castle. Ferries stop at the main islands in the archipelago as well as stopping at some other islands on request. We disembarked from the ferry on reaching Loka on the island of Moja which is in the outermost central archipelago with a population of 300 residents.

The last leg – a motor boat ride

We noted in Loka that the tall cross-shaped maypole for the upcoming solstice celebration had already been erected on a nearby open field. In the small harbour we

transferred to Jill and Nils' open outboard motorboat for the last 20 minutes of our journey to Kasmas.

The cabin – our home on the island

Excitement mounted as we approached the densely wooded island of Kasmas and soon the cabin came into view. The island was too remote to have electricity or running water. We cooked with gas and water was hand pumped from a borehole. Besides the main three-bedroom cabin there were four smaller cabins. One was a bedroom, one a traditional sauna and a bucket shower, a storeroom and a pit latrine. There were three other cabins dotted around the island which belong to their cousins.

Prolonged mid-summer twilight

When evening arrived, we were amazed that after the sun set, the sky remained a shade of blue that was too light to be able to see stars even though there was absolutely no light pollution. That evening one of the extended family members entertained us with traditional Swedish folk songs played on traditional flutes known as spilåpipa, which he had hand carved from local wood.

Vegetation on the island

The next day we walked around the perimeter of the island in just under an hour. On the way we found wild strawberries and collected seaweed which was later dried and crushed and used to break down the contents in the pit latrine. The island is home to a variety of trees with Birch, Scots Pine and Norwegian Spruce being the most prolific. There are also very sweet wild strawberries and Juniper bushes.

Solstice Celebration in Loka, Moja

On the morning of the Solstice celebrations, we collected supple birch tree branches and wildflowers to use in creating floral

crowns (blomsterkransar) to wear at the festivities. These were ready by the time we left in two motorboats back to Moja where we had seen the maypole set up. The maypole by now had been adorned with flowers, greenery, and ribbons. Families arrived, setting up picnics which included solstice treats of sill (pickled herrings) and Jordgubbstarta (strawberry cake).

Dancing around the maypole

At 2pm everyone was called to form a circle around the Maypole. The band consisting of a violin, accordion and a guitar started playing and dance instructions were called. Children, teenagers, parents and grandparents all joined in, holding hands and singing while dancing around the maypole. The traditional folk songs included playful imitations of various animals such as "Små grodorna" (The Little Frogs); and elephants. We just followed what others were doing as the instructions were in Swedish. At the end of the joyous festivities we headed back to Kasmas.

Our last day in Stockholm

All too soon our stay was over, and we headed back to the mainland and the comforts of electricity and running water. On our last day in Stockholm we watched the daily changing of the guard known as Högvaktens vaktavlösning at the Royal Palace (Kungliga Slottet). Then we visited the Vasa Museum (Ann's first choice), followed by the nearby ABBA museum (my first choice). In the ABBA museum we sang to ABBA music in a re-created recording booth, and I was able to pose with Bjorn's iconic five-pointed star-shaped guitar. Then it was off to the airport, bringing to a close what was a rare and truly memorable adventure with friends. ■

Maypole celebrations
for the summer solstice



Kayaking in the
late evening



Ann pumping
water



PINELANDS HIGH TOP ACHIEVERS!

Pinelands High School is proud to celebrate the Class of 2025, who delivered outstanding National Senior Certificate results. Special congratulations to their top six students, each with an aggregate of 90% or above:

Rebecca Loggenberg: 9 As
(7 above 95%, average 97%)

Highlights: 100% FS Maths (Extended), 99% EGD, 97% Accounting

Anna Gibbon: 8 As
(6 above 95%, average 96%)

Highlights: 99% FS Maths, 97% Geography

Hanaan Sanglay: 9 As
(average 92%)

Highlight: 98% EGD

Sebastian Chiat: 8 As
(average 92%)

Highlights: 99% Life Sciences,
97% Physical Sciences, 97% Music

Zara Clayton: 9 As
(average 91%)

Highlight: 97% EGD



Bhairava Moodley: 8 As
(average 90%)

Highlight: 96% Life Sciences

A further 11 students achieved aggregates of 80% or more.

Record Bachelor's pass rate

The class achieved an excellent Bachelor's pass rate of 91%, up from 86% in 2024. This is the highest Bachelor's pass rate in the

school's history, alongside an overall pass rate of 98.5%.

A true team effort

Well done to every member of the Matric Class of 2025, and thank you to the families, teachers, caregivers and support staff who helped make this success possible. These results reflect commitment, consistency and teamwork across the school community.



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At Pinelands High School, we take pride in fostering academic excellence, providing a supportive environment, and offering diverse opportunities for all students to thrive.

Home to South Africa's Top Achievers



Rebecca Loggenberg

97% average

- **9 As** - 7 above **95%**
- **Top 1%** for Further Studies Maths (extended)
- **100%** for Further Studies Maths (extended)
- **99%** for Engineering Graphics and Design
- **97%** for Accounting



Anna Gibbon

96% average

- **8 As** - 6 above **95%**
- **Top 1%** for Further Studies Math (standard)
- **99%** for Further Studies Maths (standard)
- **97%** for Geography

**Open
Day**

Sat 7 March

register on www.phs.org.za

Email: info@phs.org.za www.phs.org.za

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH EVERY DAY ROUTINES

By Keachell Jeffery, PNPS

GRACE PRIMARY SCHOOL a living education OPEN DAY

**Friday
6 March**

Programme runs
8:45 – 10:30am



We are a thriving independent school in Pinelands with small classes, using a rich and stimulating curriculum, and striving to nurture the growth of each child as a whole person.



If you would like to learn more about the 'living education' offered by Grace Primary, please join us at this event to see the school in action and ask all your questions

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www.graceprimary.org



As the school year moves forward, it's often the small, everyday habits that make the biggest difference in our children's wellbeing. These routines may seem ordinary, but they quietly shape how children learn, cope, and feel throughout the day.

REST MATTERS

Sleep is one of the most important foundations for a successful school day. Children who are well rested find it easier to concentrate, manage their emotions, and keep up with classroom demands. Late nights, irregular bedtimes, or too much screen time before bed can make mornings stressful and affect learning. A calm, consistent bedtime routine helps children arrive at school feeling settled and ready to engage.

MORNING GOODBYES

For some families, especially at the start of the year, separation anxiety can be a challenge. Emotional goodbyes are a normal part of adjustment, and most children grow more comfortable as they settle into routines, make friends, and connect with their teachers. Schools work hard to create welcoming spaces, while parents can support this by offering confident, positive farewells that reassure children about the day ahead.

LISTENING AND GUIDANCE

Children need to know that there are adults who will listen and support them when problems arise. Whether the concern is academic, social, or emotional, early communication makes a difference. Encouraging children to speak to a trusted adult builds confidence, and open dialogue between families and schools ensures thoughtful, consistent support.

CONSISTENCY BUILDS CONFIDENCE

There will always be days when routines falter or emotions run high – that's part of growing up. What matters most is the steady presence of understanding and reassurance. When children know what to expect and feel supported both at home and at school, they are more likely to face challenges with confidence. John C. Maxwell reminds us: "Small disciplines repeated with consistency every day lead to great achievements."

SHARED EFFORTS

By prioritising healthy routines, easing emotional transitions, and being present when guidance is needed, families and schools together can create a nurturing environment. These everyday efforts, though simple, play a vital role in helping children feel safe, confident, and ready to learn. ■

PNPS PINELANDS NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

OPEN DAY 18 FEB 2026
08:00 – 09:30

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At Pinelands North Primary School, we don't just host sports; we cultivate a community where talent knows no ceiling and every child finds their stride. Our programme is a unique ecosystem that balances elite-level achievement with grassroots development, ensuring every student is supported holistically.

We are incredibly proud to be the home of South African and Provincial athletes in Swimming and Chess, as well as young footballers who represent the top academies in the country. However, at PNPS, being an elite athlete isn't just about individual accolades – it's about leadership. These high performance students actively share their skills and technical knowledge with their school teammates, turning every practice session into a masterclass in collaboration.

Our narrative is one of inclusive excellence. We understand that while one child might be eyeing a national podium, another is celebrating their first successful serve or checkmate. We cater to this entire spectrum by providing specialized coaching for our top-tier competitors while maintaining a nurturing, high-growth environment for those still learning the basics. By bridging the gap between the highly skilled and the beginners, we create a "Red School" spirit rooted in mentorship. Whether a student is a provincial star or a first-time participant, they are given the tools to thrive. In our "outdoor classrooms," the true victory is found in how we elevate one another, ensuring that every child, regardless of their starting point, feels like a champion.

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FIVE TIPS FOR A HEALTHY START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR

The start of a new school year brings excitement, fresh routines, and new opportunities for learning and growth. It's also the perfect time to pause and check in on your child's health – a few simple checks at the start of the year can go a long way in supporting their wellbeing, confidence, and ability to thrive. Here are five key areas every parent should consider as the year begins:

1. VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations are one of the most effective ways to protect children against preventable illnesses. Crèches and schools bring children into close contact with one another, making it easier for infections to spread. Ensuring your child's vaccinations are up to date not only protects them, but also helps safeguard classmates, teachers, and the broader community. If you're unsure whether your child is due for any vaccines, a quick review with us can provide clarity and peace of mind.

2. DEWORMING

Deworming is an important but often overlooked part of child health. Intestinal worms can affect energy levels, appetite, growth, and concentration, which may interfere with a child's ability to learn and engage during the day. Routine deworming is recommended every six months from 12 months of age, not only for older children, and helps keep children feeling well and able to focus on learning and play.

3. VISION AND HEARING CHECKS

Clear vision and good hearing are essential for learning. Children may not always realise or communicate that they're struggling to see clearly, follow activities, or hear instructions, and difficulties can

sometimes show up as frustration, poor concentration, or behavioural changes. Routine vision and hearing checks allow for early identification of problems, ensuring that small issues don't become barriers to confidence or development.

4. DENTAL CHECK-UPS

Oral health is closely linked to overall wellbeing. Tooth decay and dental discomfort can affect eating, sleeping, and concentration, and may even lead to absences from crèche or school. Regular dental check-ups help prevent problems before they start and encourage good oral hygiene habits from a young age. A healthy smile plays a big role in a child's self-esteem.

5. EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Finally, take a moment to review and update emergency contact details with your child's crèche or school. Life changes quickly – phone numbers, caregivers, or work arrangements may have shifted since last year. Accurate, up-to-date information ensures the school can reach you or another trusted adult promptly if needed.

Preparing your child for school isn't only about learning milestones - it's about giving them the best possible foundation for a happy, healthy year ahead. A few proactive steps now can help prevent avoidable health issues later, allowing your child to focus on what matters most: feeling well, growing, learning and enjoying their days.

Work alongside your doctor to manage routine health needs, common childhood illnesses, as well as long-term medical conditions. Use a holistic approach to keep your children well through every stage of their childhood. ■

By Dr Nasreen Akoo & Dr Tennille Thomas (Health Hive)



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Primary School (incl Gr RR and Grade R)

Friday, 27 February

09h00 – 12h00

High School (incl Gr 7)

Saturday, 28 February

09h00 – 12h00

(Pre-book slots via the website)

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EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

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the **muse**
community magazine



GREAT MATRIC RESULTS FOR CANNONS CREEK

Congratulations to the Cannons Creek Matric Class of 2025 for a phenomenal set of results – 100% pass rate for the 23rd consecutive year, with a 97.5% Bachelors Pass. The class of 40 pupils achieved a total of 134 As, with an average of 3.35 distinctions per candidate. The overall class average was 77.2%.

Eight subjects achieved 'A' averages: Life Orientation (81%), Design (88%), Dramatic Arts (84%), Geography (81%), IT (90%), Mandarin (91%), Music (84%), and Tourism (86%). Fifteen pupils achieved an 'A' average overall, 16 pupils achieved a 'B' average overall, and 7 pupils achieved a 'C' average overall.

High School Principal Mr Angus Morton said, "We are delighted with the outstanding results achieved by the Class of 2025, and they are to be commended on their commitment and level of application in their final year. The staff and pupils worked hard to achieve this success. These results are reflective of the partnership between the school, the parents, and the pupils. Grade 12 results come at the end of a long educational journey, and tribute must be paid to all who have instilled a love for learning in the pupils."

In an address to the Matrics and their parents, Mr Morton highlighted the importance of each individual pupil reaching their full potential – whether achieving 'A' symbols or individual pupils maintaining the same marks as during the year.

Six pupils achieved a full-house of distinctions, and must be congratulated on this phenomenal achievement - Ciaran Steenveld (8 distinctions: English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Life Orientation, Accounting, CAT, Physical Sciences and FS Mathematics), Chloe McComb (7 distinctions: English,

Afrikaans, Mathematics, Life Orientation, Dramatic Arts, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences), Ella Molema (7 distinctions: English, Afrikaans, Mathematical Literacy, Life Orientation, Dramatic Arts, History, and Visual Arts), Molly de Witt (7 distinctions: English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Music, and Physical Sciences), Michael Sparks (7 distinctions: English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Life Orientation, Geography, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences) and Scott Wilkins (7 distinctions: English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Life Orientation, Geography, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences).

Special congratulations to the Kleinsmith School Dux for Sciences winner, Ciaran Steenveld who achieved an average of 96.6%, and also achieved the following at Valedictory: Academic Honours, PWC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) Book Award for Accounting and Mathematics, the Tech Team Trophy, and the Wrede Trophy for Service. Most notably, Ciaran scored 100% for Further Studies Mathematics - Extended. Congratulations to Ella Molema, the School Dux for Humanities, who also achieved Academic Honours at Valedictory.

The future plans are diverse for this group with Jaehee Jung studying Design in Singapore, Amber Molema studying Veterinary Nursing at University of Pretoria, and Ciaran Steenveld studying applied mathematics at UCT. Chloe McComb and Molly de Witt plan to enroll in studying Medicine at UCT, while several pupils plan on studying Chemical Engineering or Mechatronics at UCT / Stellenbosch. Scott Wilkins plans to initially study a BSc at UCT, hoping then to transfer to City U in Hong Kong in September. ■

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CELEBRATING PINEHURST SENIOR AWARDS – NOVEMBER 2025

The Senior Awards Ceremony was a joyous occasion with the senior choir giving a lively performance, accompanied by the orchestra. Here are the award winners with a few featured below with Principal Brendan Carroll; Head of Music, Ina O'Reilly and Sports Director Joshua Carroll.

Kate Manson-Kullin: the Mia Farrar Music Award and the Courtesy and Service to the School Award.

Julia Walker: Hooley Music award

Matthew Pienaar: The Berndt Trophy for excellence and a natural aptitude for Mathematics. He was also awarded the Swan Fellowship Award, as voted by fellow Grade 7 pupils for displaying qualities of friendship, kindness and compassion.

Oscar Termorshuizen: Pinehurst Drama Cup.

William Bryant (boy) and Liana Miller (girl): The Kruger Award for keen commitment to a number of sports.

Matthew Pienaar (boy) and Helen Gray (girl): The Sportsmanship Award.

Megan Finegan: Sportswoman of the Year
Christian Clark: Sportsman of the Year.

Kamohelo Dingaan: Sarah O'Neil Award.

Charleen Kengne: Brash Academic Award

Liana Miller: Anderson Academic Award.

Charlotte Stuart: Proficiency in Languages Award.

Jackson Alsop: Gleeson-Baird Art Trophy.

Liana Miller and Matthew Pienaar:

The Principal's Award.

Pinehurst celebrates the hard work and commitment by the learners and wishes them all the very best for the future.



Kate Manson-Kullin
Mia Farrar Music Award



Julia Walker
Hooley Music Award



Kamohelo Dingaan
Sarah O'Neil Award



Megan Finegan
Sportswoman of the Year



Charleen Kengne
Brash Academic Award



Liana Miller and Matthew Pienaar
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Chloe McComb
7 distinctions



Ella Molema
7 distinctions



Molly de Witt
7 distinctions



Michael Sparks
7 distinctions



Scott Wilkins
7 distinctions



Juhuk Kim
6 distinctions
(incl Further Studies Mathematics Extended)



Reese Rumble
5 distinctions



Ameerah Patel
5 distinctions



Maya Vogt
5 distinctions



Mohamed Sufyaan Khan
5 distinctions



Talya Davids
5 distinctions



Amaal Cassiem
5 distinctions



Isabella Baker
5 distinctions



Shahaan Ho-Kim
4 distinctions



Anika Alli
4 distinctions



Salika Alli
4 distinctions



Teglin Harrod
4 distinctions



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Friday, 27 February
09h00 – 12h00 Primary School
(incl Gr RR and Grade R)
Saturday, 28 February
09h00 – 12h00
High School (incl Gr 7)



KEEPING PINELANDS SAFE THIS FESTIVE SEASON

Over the festive season, Pinelands once again demonstrated the power of coordinated community safety through the Pinelands Community Improvement District's Festive Season Safety Project. From early December through early January, a comprehensive operation was rolled out to ensure that residents, businesses and visitors could enjoy the season in a safe, well-managed environment.

A VISIBLE, PROACTIVE PRESENCE

The festive period brings increased activity to shopping centres, public spaces and transport routes. Recognising this, Pinelands CID implemented 24/7 safety coverage with staggered shifts to maximise visibility during peak hours. Fixed and mobile patrols focused on key areas such as Central Square, Howard Centre, Forest Drive and the Pinelands Canal, acting as both a deterrent to crime and a rapid response mechanism when incidents arose.

CID officers worked closely with safety partners and the CID Control Room, responding in real time to crime intelligence networks, reports from residents and businesses and CCTV alerts. This integrated approach ensured that suspicious activity was identified early and addressed before it could escalate.



PARTNERSHIPS THAT STRENGTHEN SAFETY

A defining feature of the project was the strong collaboration between Pinelands CID and its safety partners. Joint operations were conducted with City Law Enforcement, Metro Police, Traffic Services and collaboration with Community in Blue, Pinelands Neighbourhood Watch and the South African Police Service (SAPS).

High-visibility vehicle patrols and road safety operations, including vehicle and alcohol checks, helped maintain order on main routes and deter opportunistic crime. Law Enforcement officers focused on by-law compliance, addressing issues such as illegal trading, public drinking and noise complaints, while Metro Police provided tactical support for higher-risk incidents.

Bicycle patrols added another layer of coverage, particularly along the canal, in pedestrian zones and in hard-to-reach areas. These patrollers also played a key role in community engagement, interacting with joggers, dog walkers and families, and promoting responsible use of shared public spaces.



COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SAFETY

Beyond enforcement, the festive safety project placed a strong emphasis on community engagement and awareness. Safety awareness walkabouts, festive signage and regular updates on social media helped keep residents informed and involved. Messages encouraging vigilance, responsible alcohol use and reporting of suspicious behaviour reinforced the idea that safety is a shared responsibility.

Social development partners, including Umanyano, assisted with patrols in hotspot areas, contributing to a more holistic approach that balanced enforcement with social awareness.

RESULTS THAT MATTER

Throughout the festive season, Pinelands CID recorded many successful interventions, from preventing property crime and addressing public nuisance behaviour to supporting SAPS with arrests and evidence gathering. Regular briefings and weekly safety reports allowed the team to adapt operations based on emerging trends and hotspot analysis.

As showcased on the Pinelands CID Facebook page, these efforts translated into visible action on the ground – coordinated patrols, joint operations and rapid responses that reassured the community and reinforced Pinelands' reputation as a well-managed, safe suburb.

LOOKING AHEAD

The success of the Festive Season Safety Project highlights the value of partnership, planning and proactive engagement. Pinelands CID remains committed to building on these foundations, continually refining its approach to keep Pinelands safe, welcoming and resilient throughout the year. Safety is not a seasonal effort – it is a daily commitment, made stronger when the community and its partners work together.

**CONTACT
PLCID**

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www.pinelandscid.co.za



By
Sue Torr
Director
Crue Invest

Why your retirement annuity deserves attention now

As the 2025/2026 tax year draws to a close, investors have a valuable opportunity to reduce their tax bill while boosting their long-term retirement savings.

Why February matters

South Africa's tax year runs from 1 March 2025 to 29 February 2026, and any contributions made to your retirement annuity (RA) on or before this date count toward the current year's tax deduction. For many investors, this is one of the most effective ways to reduce taxable income, legally and efficiently.

Understand how a retirement annuity works

A retirement annuity is a long-term investment vehicle designed to help you accumulate capital for retirement. You contribute money either monthly or through ad-hoc lump-sum payments, which is then invested in underlying unit trusts or portfolios aligned with your risk profile and time horizon. Generally speaking, your funds remain invested until at least age 55.

On retirement, you may withdraw up to one-third of the capital as a cash lump sum, subject to the retirement tax tables, while the remaining two-thirds must be used to purchase an annuity that provides you with an income during retirement. This structure enforces discipline, encourages long-term investing, and ensures that your savings are used for their intended purpose, which is funding your post-work life.

The tax advantages of an RA

One of the key attractions of an RA lies in its triple-tiered tax benefits:

- **Tax-deductible contributions:** You can deduct up to 27.5% of your taxable income or remuneration (whichever is higher) each year, capped at R350 000.
- **Tax-free growth:** Within your RA, all investment returns, including interest, dividends, and capital gains, are completely tax-free. This allows your portfolio to compound faster than a comparable discretionary investment exposed to ongoing taxes.
- **Tax efficiency at retirement:** When you retire, the first R550 000 of any lump sum withdrawn (including previous withdrawals) is tax-free. The remainder is taxed according to favourable retirement lump-sum tax tables, and any annuity income you draw thereafter is taxed at your marginal rate.

The real magic of an RA lies in time and compounding. Because all returns are reinvested without erosion from annual taxation, growth accelerates exponentially.

Beyond tax: Other advantages of an RA

- **Creditor protection:** In most cases, the assets within an RA are shielded from creditors, providing valuable peace of mind for business owners and professionals.
- **Estate planning benefits:** Upon death before retirement, the funds held in your RA do not automatically form part of your estate, which can help reduce estate duty exposure and expedite benefits to dependants. Keep in mind, however, that SARS may still assess estate duty depending on whether contributions were tax-deductible.
- **Flexible contributions:** You can stop, reduce, or increase your payments at any time without penalties. This flexibility allows you to adapt your savings pattern to changes in income or cash flow.

Creating long-term wealth

An RA should not be viewed merely as a tax shelter but as a cornerstone of a disciplined wealth-building strategy. The compulsory preservation until age 55 prevents premature withdrawals, while professional fund management ensures diversification across asset classes. RA's are one of the most powerful compounding tools available.

Moreover, the tax refund generated from your contribution can itself be reinvested, either back into your RA or toward reducing high-interest debt, magnifying the long-term benefit. Viewed this way, topping up your RA is not an expense; it is a transfer of wealth from the taxman to your future self.

Making the most of your final stretch

Before the tax year ends, take stock of how much of your annual RA allowance you have used. If you have room to contribute more, make the payment as early as possible to ensure it reflects timeously before year-end.

Retirement annuities remain one of the most efficient and reliable means of building long-term wealth in South Africa. They offer unmatched tax advantages, enforce disciplined saving, and allow your investments to compound in a sheltered environment. As the tax year deadline approaches, make February the month you invest in your future. ■

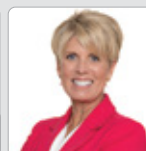
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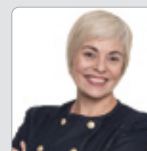
At Crue Invest, our dedicated team of advisors, tax professionals, and legal experts work together to craft integrated strategies that align with your goals and values. Let 2026 be the year we walk this path with you—creating and protecting your wealth, together.



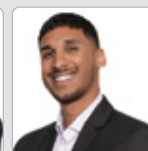
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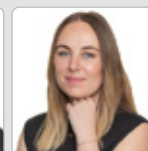
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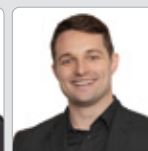
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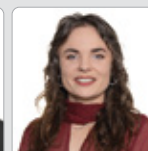
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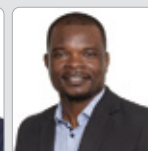
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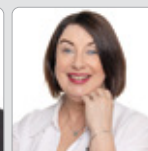
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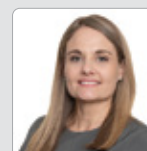
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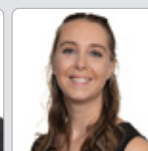
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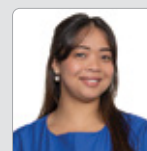
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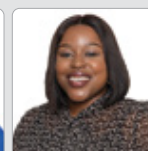
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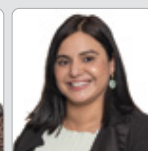
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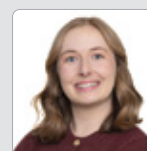
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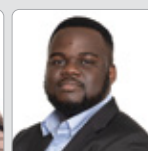
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By **Heleen Meyer**

Pinelands resident, foodie and author of *Food from the Heart*, and *Make five/Maak vyf*.

A panful of green veggies with eggs

Serves 4

250 ml (2 tbsp) olive oil
10 ml (2 tsp) wholegrain mustard
10 ml (2 tsp) apple cider vinegar or lemon juice
salt and pepper
250 g brown or button mushrooms, thickly sliced
5-6 large baby marrows, cut into ribbons with a vegetable peeler
100 g fine green beans, halved diagonally
125 ml (½ cup) frozen peas, rinsed
60 ml (¼ cup) coarsely torn fresh mint
4-6 eggs, soft fried, boiled or poached
mature white cheddar or pecorino cheese - coarsely grated for serving
lemon wedges for serving

1. Mix 20 ml (4 tsp) of the oil with the mustard and vinegar or lemon juice and season to taste. Set aside.
2. Heat the rest of the oil in a large frying pan over a medium temperature. Sauté the mushrooms until aromatic, but don't overcook them – they must still be juicy.
3. Spoon the mushrooms out and add baby marrows to the pan. Sauté until just tender, but still bright green in colour. Take care, as this is a very quick process.
4. Add the beans and sauté for another few minutes.
5. Stir the mushrooms back into the pan with the peas. Add the sauce, toss through and season the mixture to taste.
6. Stir in the mint and serve immediately, topped with eggs, cooked to your preference. Sprinkle with cheese and serve with lemon wedges.



Portrait and food shot: Adel Ferrreira
Food image: courtesy of LiG Magazine

Green & gold goodness

Sometimes, the right combination of everyday ingredients can be so good together, that it almost feels like a little surprise in your mouth.

How does the combination of bright green veggies, pan-fried mushrooms, and a lemony dressing with fresh mint sound? This nutritious dish is light yet filling and so quick to prepare. You would know by now that I love the synergy of a few basic ingredients that complement one another to create a meal with lots of flavour—that's exactly what this pan of wholesomeness is.

Pan-fried mushrooms are always so tasty and add lots of flavour to this dish. Mint, peas and green veg are always a good combination, but if you're not a fan of fresh mint, then use Italian parsley or

thyme instead. This is all topped off with an egg (or two), prepared to your preference and a sprinkle of mature cheese. A slightly runny yolk adds to the 'sauce' of the dish, but if you prefer a firmer yolk, it will be just as mouthwatering.

This is ideal for a lazy summer brunch or as a light vegetarian meal. For a more substantial meal, you can add fried bacon with the eggs. Or if you omit the eggs, serve it as a delicious low-carb side dish – ready in no time. The secret is, never to overcook green veggies. Rather make sure they retain as much of their nutrition, vibrant green colour, taste and texture by just lightly cooking them.

Make this a regular recipe in your repertoire and be creative with the veggies you use every time. Try it with broccoli florets, spinach or even asparagus when in season.

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Heleen has a passion to inspire, encourage and teach everyone about the joy of food that is good for you. She uses everyday ingredients and her recipes, tips and creative ideas will make you feel like a chef in your own kitchen. Keep an eye on her social media for the next cooking dem. SCAN the QR code to SUBSCRIBE to her website; or follow her on Instagram @heleenmeyerfood for delicious ideas and more.



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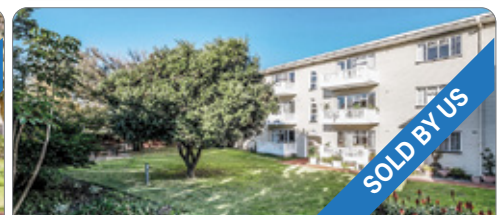
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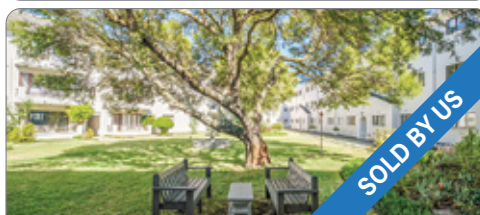
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