



Our 2015 English Olympiad Winner



The Grahamstown Foundation and the South African Council for English Education announced the rank order of the Top 100 English Olympiad winners at a prize-giving ceremony on 16 July 2015. First place was awarded to 18 year old Hannah Fagan from Tamboerskloof (*pictured left*) a Grade 12 pupil from Camps Bay High School.

Hannah's family lineage of at least three generations of South African legal experts - her father Professor Anton Fagan acts as head of the department of private law at UCT, her late grandfather Hannes Fagan, was the Western Cape's deputy judge president and her great-grandfather, Henry Allan Fagan, was an award-winning writer and former chief justice of South Africa - has not convinced her to pursue a career in law however. Because she wishes to pursue her love of thinking and writing, Hannah says that she intends to break from the family tradition in 2016 to study English, linguistics and history. Her family are said to be "delighted" at her achievement in the Olympiad and they have welcomed her choice of career.

Hannah was one of 25 pupils from Camps Bay High School, along with over 8,000 pupils from 400 schools in southern Africa, who participated in the competition held in March 2015. Her prize included a R30,000 cash prize and scholarship offers from Rhodes University and UCT.

Hannah said that her victory could quite possibly have convinced her late grandfather, who died in 2014, that she was perhaps more equipped to "think and write" than listen and judge. "He always encouraged or hoped that I would be the next generation Fagan lawyer but given my win at this Olympiad, he would probably have accepted that the law was not for me after all."

The criteria for the 2015 Olympiad included essay and creative questions on an anthology compiled by the South African Council for English Education (SACEE) entitled *Revelations and Transformations* which contained 11 South African short stories. "From a technical point of view, it was amazing to study the selection and to be able to use the quotes" said Hannah. "I am happy and overwhelmed by this win."

A full report on the 2015 English Olympiad prize-giving ceremony and a list of the top 20 winners are on page 8 of this Newsletter.

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Our Mission Statement

To support the teaching, learning and appreciation of English



From my Chair

JUBILATION!

Last year SACEE celebrated its Diamond Jubilee Year with a number of events which are covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

This year sees another milestone in our history – 40 years since we founded the English Olympiad. In 1975, the Chairperson of the Eastern Cape Branch of SACEE mentioned at a meeting that she had been asked by a schoolboy why there was a Maths Olympiad and a Science Olympiad but no English Olympiad. Betty Young then turned to me – a young English teacher at the time – and said, “Malcolm, why don’t you do something about that?” And so the idea of an English Olympiad was conceived. In March 1976 the new baby was born. We will report more on this at the prize-giving which will be held in Grahamstown in July.

In 2017 we will move on to another significant event in the history of SACEE as we celebrate 50 years of *English Alive*.

When I think of these and all the other activities that SACEE features each year, I am always amazed that so much is achieved by small groups of volunteers and our two enthusiastic and efficient administrative assistants. One cannot but help thinking of Winston Churchill’s tribute to the few to whom so much is owed.

Dr M G Venter
National Chairperson
SACEE

Recipient of the English Academy’s Gold Medal - Mr Robin Malan



The English Academy of Southern Africa awarded its prestigious Gold Medal (2014) to Mr Robin Malan. The presentation took place during the Western Cape’s ‘Festival Evening of Readings’ in April 2015. Robin is pictured left with Mr Rajendra Chetty the President of the Academy. Mr Malan, a renowned writer and publisher, has close links to SACEE. As well as being the editor of its publication *English Alive* for many years, he has acted as advisor/mentor and SACEE representative for the Western Cape branch on many occasions.
Congratulations and well done Robin!





Pictured above: Marie Letter from Pearson High School who won 1st prize in the competition.

Eastern Cape:

The Eastern Cape's main project is the De Beers English Olympiad – see full report on page 8 of this Newsletter. In addition the branch organises a number of 'outreach' programmes and teaching workshops. In 2015 the branch took over the running of the local inter-schools' Speech Contest which, until 2013 had been organised by the Port Elizabeth branch of the Guild of Speech and Drama Teachers

Report on the Inter-schools' Speech Contest

Contestants from thirty-three schools from around the Eastern Cape area – Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Port Alfred, Uitenhage, Despatch, Kirkwood and Jeffrey's Bay – took part. The contest was held on 6 August 2015 in the library at Alexander Road High School and it was attended by members of the Guild of Speech and Drama Teachers, parents, English teachers and peers of the contestants as well as such distinguished East Cape personalities as Janine Lee (SABC3 TV journalist and 2013 recipient of the National Television general news category award).

Pictured right middle: Dorcus Naude from Strelitzia High School who was placed 3rd and adjudged "the most promising speaker."



Each contestant had to present a 5 minute prepared speech on a topic of their own choice. The judges allocated marks for these prepared speeches and the top-scoring learners from this round were then required to give an impromptu speech for which they also received marks. The topic for this impromptu section was "Tablets". It was interesting to see the wide variety of subjects this word conjured in the minds of the contestants. These included anything and everything from electronic gadgets to pills prescribed for depression!

The Branch intends to run this Speech Contest as a SACEE annual event, which it is hoped will provide the Province's young orators with an opportunity to develop their English communication skills in an environment which presents a greater challenge than merely speaking in front of a class.

Other activities of the Eastern Cape branch of SACEE -

Unfortunately their 'Lushington' project had to be closed because Mr Mzi Mahola found that his family commitments were too great to carry on with the project. As an alternative, the branch sponsored candidates from Solomon Mhlanga to attend workshops run by a teacher and two school girls from Riebeek College.

The branch also increased its sponsorship of the top 20 winners in the De Beers English Olympiad and added further funding for disbursement to the top 3 FAL Olympiad winners. The branch decided that the FAL wing of the Olympiad seemed the most deserving for the extra funding.

Mid-Vaal: One of our smaller branches, Mid-Vaal branch concentrates on running a very successful Junior Creative Writing competition for Primary School learners in the Johannesburg area. A small committee of members assist the Chairperson, Miss Anastella Pagageorgiou, in organising this annual competition. The competition was again a huge success in 2015 attracting an increase in the number of entries from the 2014 competition.



The competition is sponsored by Futurevista, Reader's Warehouse, The Miss Earth South Africa Programme, Chas Everitt, Mondeor Primary School, The Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, Reed Printing and Generation Earth.

Western Cape: On Wednesday 22nd April 2015 and in celebration of SACEE's Jubilee year, the Western Cape branch of SACEE held a special 'Festival Evening of Readings' event at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Newlands. This featured ex-contributors to *English Alive* who have since become published writers. Names included Michael King (contributor in the 1960s), Robin Auld, Andre Eva Bosch, Graeme Bloch, Shaun Johnson, Mike Kantey and Julia Martin (1970s), Peter Anderson, Justin Fox and Megan Hall (1980s) Karen Jeynes, Sarah Johnson Rowan and Nicholas Spagnoletti (1990s) and Amy Jephta, Duane Jethro (*pictured right giving her reading*), Siphokazi Jonas and Jon Keevy (2000s).



Further Jubilee events included a grand 'Spellcheck' competition and the branch's annual 'Forum Discussions'.

The Western Cape's main and most prestigious project is the publication of *English Alive*. This is an annual publication and consists of an anthology of writings from High Schools and Colleges throughout South Africa. A report of the launch of the 2015 edition is shown on page 6 of this newsletter.



The branch also continued with its 'Primary School Reading' project. The 'Rambling Readers' form teams of three or four who read once weekly to Foundation Phase learners in five Primary schools – Windermere, Wingfield, Facticeon and HJ Kroneberg in the Kensington area and Holy Cross in Zonnebloem. In 2015 more volunteer readers came forward. Pictured left – Grade 1 Facticeon Primary School pupils in the school library (which the 'Rambling Readers' helped to set up). With them are Merilyn Dewer, Facticeon headmaster Saul Issacs, June Fourie and Bromyn Norman.

Bloemfontein: This branch has been in danger of closing down for some months now. The Chairperson, Miss Norine van Arkel, who is now in her 80s, is wishing to retire and she has been struggling to find a sufficient number of volunteers who are willing to serve on the branch committee. At the moment there is only one other person helping Miss van Arkel in running the branch whereas ideally a branch committee should consist of at least five persons. If there is anyone in the Bloemfontein area who feels that they could help with the branch, please contact Miss van Arkel directly – telephone 051 447 7868 or e-mail our Vice-Chairperson Mr Neil le Roux (Border branch) at 'sacee@telkomsa.net'.

Polokwane:

Our Polokwane branch, our newest branch which was 'resurrected' in September 2013, continues with its debating programme. The teams are currently looking forward to the 2016 SAATA National Schools Debates Competition. Only 10 schools from the Limpopo Province will be entering learners from Grade 9 to Grade 11 and workshops are to be held in April 2016. Following the Provincial competitions in May, the National Final will take place on 6th October 2016.



Pretoria:

In 2015, Pretoria branch held its annual Creative Writing competitions for both Primary and High School learners from the local area. Over 700 entries were received, an increase in numbers from 2014. The grand prize-giving event took place on 11 September 2015.

The following is the poem submitted by Roberto dos Santos of Hatfield Christian College, Pretoria, who was awarded 1st place in the Senior Poetry section of the competition -

Is there Light at the End of the Tunnel?

*A country with a history, a people with a past,
rising leaders who retaliate with a hatred unsurpassed.
Victims cry out, reasoning with the unmistakable condemnation,
as the people strive hopelessly against the inevitable desperation.*

*The nation dangles at the ends of strings on a dangerous frontier,
led onto the global stage as audiences witness a confused puppeteer.
The darkness echoes whispers at the harbinger of doom,
For a free rainbow nation filled with suffering and gloom*

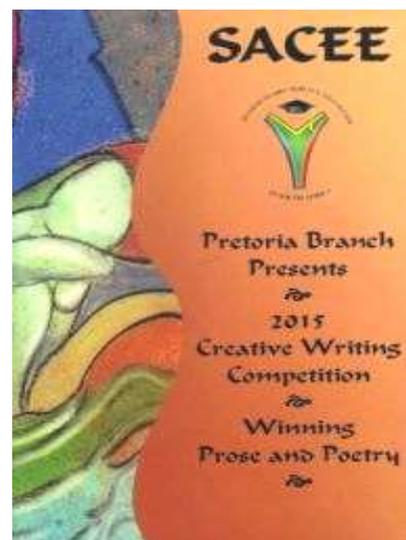
*The unsettling quiet is broken by the crackle of the flame,
As we ponder in deep thought on whom our misery to blame,
The foundation of the law is built on greed and neglect,
While education is in despair and health care is a regret.*

*The homeless and the hungry fill our dirty streets,
But soon they'll be swept away into our parliamentary seats.
The hard earned hope by the faces dripping of sweat and blood
Are scavanted by the simple and corrupt and thrown into the mud.*

*This is the future you voted for...tell me, are you satisfied?
Have your promises been broken; have your children been denied?
Are you content with the waiting or are you afraid of appeal?
There is power in one voice, there is power when you kneel.*

*The time has come at last to remove the blinding veil;
Will our country be Africa's victorious head or its lagging tail?
As the candle is blown out and the dull smoke rises,
I see people, their excuses, failures and compromises.*

*Is this not our home? Is this not our land?
Was this not Madiba's dream...or did we misunderstand?
Is there hope for the future, is there still peace to restore?
For the nation of South Africa, there is still light on the other side of the
door.*



All winning and commendable entries that were honoured at the 2015 prize-giving event have been published into a booklet. Priced at R85 per copy (including postage) the booklet can be obtained from the Pretoria branch –

E-mail sacepta@iburst.co.za or
download an order form from our website
– www.sacee.org.za.

Pictured right – four girls from St Mary's DSG who were all prize-winners in the 2015 Creative Writing competition and whose work was published in the booklet which is on sale from the Pretoria branch of SACEE – see above right.

From left to right –

Alexia Maderthaner (Grade 6 Winner in both the prose and the poetry section); Olivia de Kock (Grade 7 Winner in the poetry section); Keira van Zyl (Grade 7 'Commendable' prose entry) and Kyra de Gray Birch (Grade 7 'Commendable' poetry entry)





Launch of *English Alive* 2015 - Report by Mr Robin Malan (Editor)

There was a definite lilt in the air as about ninety people gathered in the hall foyer at Rustenburg High School for Girls on the second evening of spring, 2 September 2015. The event was to celebrate the launch of the 49th anthology of *English Alive*, a collection of writings from High Schools and Colleges in South Africa. Produced annually since 1967, the prose and poetry contributions are selected from High School and College learners who are encouraged to submit their work each year.

The lilt was not coming from outside, where in true Cape style it was chillingly cold. It was, in fact, coming from above, from the unseen Rusties' musicians' gallery right over our heads. Beautiful background music to the buzzing sociable lot below. You could tell this was going to be a happy evening.

Next came a sequence of arpeggios of pretty spectacular eats created and served up by the Rusties' student catering group. People met people, people chatted to people, people bought up lots of copies of this year's issue of *English Alive* – all this as a prelude to our retiring to the warmth and comfort of the Media Centre Library. After a welcome from *English Alive* co-ordinator Anne Schlebusch, editor Robin Malan drew attention to the presence of a number of ex-*English Alivers* present:

- Robert van der Valk (contributor in 1968 and 1969, Cape Town High School and Westerford High School), now the anthology's business manager
- Andisiwe Mgibantaka (contributor in 2003 and 2004 while a student at Intlanganiso High School)
- Guest speaker Siphokazi Jonas (an ex-Queenstown Girls' High School contributor)
- Patrick Jordi (currently Head of English at Westerford High School) and a contributor in the 1980s while a student.

We then enjoyed readings from the following students whose work was published in the 2015 edition:

- Ty Bennet of St Cyprian's School: 'Does it still hurt?'
- Aaliyah Davids of Rustenburg: 'There's more than one kind of enemy'
- Ntendo Kalenga of St Cyprian's: 'The end'
- Shirlyn May of Rusthof High School: 'Thoughts'
- Tamsin Metelerkamp of Rustenburg: 'The gatekeeper'
- Shakil Solanki of Cedar House School: 'Writer's block'
- Adam van Graan of Westerford: 'nearly fiction'

Then it was time for SACEE Western Cape Chair Terrill Nicolay to introduce the dream solo of the evening: our guest speaker Siphokazi Jonas, (*pictured right*) performance poet assoluta (or well on the way to becoming that), with a Master's degree in English, her research focusing on Shakespeare in the classroom, especially in the townships, and with her academic training in English and in Drama. Siphokazi has an extraordinary power as a performer: it creeps up on you, with no histrionics. Her eyes speak, her hands punctuate and out of her mouth tumble images and rhythms that almost literally lift you out of your seat and transport you to some other place altogether. She's great, and well on her way to an enviable lifelong career as a word dream maker.



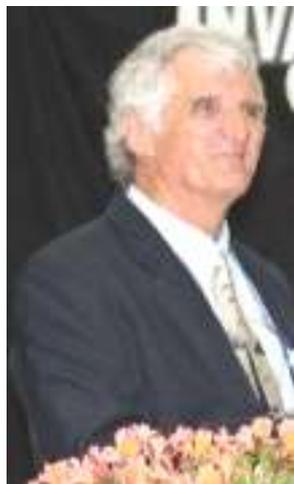
All round, a fitting climax to a most pleasant celebratory evening. – RM

Copies of the 2015 edition of 'English Alive' can be obtained from the Western Cape branch of SACEE. The cost is R55 per copy (excluding postage). Back copies of the publication and class sets can also be supplied on request.

Please note that all 2010 and 2011 editions are now sold out. Please write to 'English Alive' at P O Box 23912, Claremont, 7735 or email 'englishalive@iafrica.com' for further details. Order forms can also be down-loaded from our website 'www.sacee.org.za'.

Border:

Apart from being responsible for running one of SACEE's main National projects - the Language Challenge – see *report below* - the branch manages to organise many other activities and projects for local learners throughout the year. These include a Poetry Festival, a General Knowledge quiz, 'Fun with Words' event, Public Speaking competition, Forum Discussions, Short Story Competition, 'Read out Loud' and a Debating League!



The success of the branch is due largely to the enthusiastic and hard-working members of the branch committee who are ably led by Mr Neil le Roux (*pictured left*) the Chairperson of the Border branch of SACEE and National Vice-Chairperson of SACEE. .

The Language Challenge and Puzzle Parades This competition was originally introduced as a local project in the Border area in 1991 and since that time it has expanded into a National initiative serving schools in all 9 provinces of South Africa.

In 2015, over 35,000 learners from 102 schools participated in the Language Challenge/Puzzle Parades.



Congratulations are again extended to Caitlin Laing from Clarendon Girls' High, who has been in the top 3 in the country in her grade for the fourth year running!

The following is a breakdown of the 2015 Language Challenge results-

GRADE	NUMBER OF LEARNERS	NATIONAL AVERAGE	HIGHEST SCORE
1	3296	69.6%	40 learners scored 100%
2	3312	72.0%	18 learners scored 100%
3	3416	72.8%	20 learners scored 100%
4	4032	51.0%	1 learner scored 96%
5	3906	62.0%	2 learners scored 100%
6	3848	44.0%	1 learner scored 93%
7	3673	50.6%	1 learner scored 97%
8	2322	56.1%	1 learner scored 92%
9	2076	60.1%	2 learners scored 93%
10	1864	52.7%	1 learner scored 93%
11	1693	59.7%	3 learners scored 96%
TOTAL	33, 438		



Pictured above – some of the Grades 1-3 prize-winners who participated in the 2015 “Fun with Words” Competition (Border Branch).



Pictured above – some of the Grades 4– 11 prize-winners who participated in the ‘National Language Challenge’ 2015 (National Competition).

The 2015 De Beers English Olympiad



*Pictured above: Standing from L to R – Robert McGregor (Top 15 chaperone); Vamia Sinha (13th); Rynhard De Bruyn (12th); Angus Thring (15th); Zaheerah Limbada (5th); Nonkululeko Sikakane (Tshikululu Investments); Tsepo Monaledi (Head of De Beers Zimele) Josie Burness (4th); Keegan Leech (8th); Nandini Kochar (14th); Emily Wedepohl (9th) and Ndana Tendayi (Top 15 chaperone).
Kneeling from L to R – Rebecca Chetwin (10th); Manu Huyssen (6th); Hannah Fagan (1st); Tamsin Metelerkamp (3rd) and Tawanda Mulalu (7th). Not pictured (unable to attend) – Jessica Craven (2nd) and Aimee Fuller (11th).*

The Top 20 winners

1. Ms Hannah Fagan	Camps Bay High School
2. Ms Jessica Craven	Northcliff High School
3. Ms Tamsin Metelerkamp	Rustenburg High School for Girls
4. Ms Josie Burness	Fairmont High School
5. Ms Zaheerah Limbada	Merrifield College
6. Ms Manu Huyssen	Somerset College
7. Mr Tawanda Mulalu	Maru-A Pula, Botswana
8. Mr Keegan Leech	St John's College, Jhb
9. Ms Emily Wedepohl	Trinityhouse High School
10. Ms Rebecca Chetwin	St Teresa's School
11. Ms Aimee Fuller	Bridge House
12. Mr Rynhard De Bruyn	Helpmekeer Kollege
13. Ms Vamika Sinha	Maru-A-Pula, Botswana
14. Ms Nandini Kochar	Maru-A Pula, Botswana
15. Mr Angus Thring	Bishops Diocesan College
16. Ms Azminah Jhetam	Jeppe High School for Girls
17. Ms Jo-Anne Pringle	Jeppe High School for Girls
18. Mr Grant Fourie	Heronbridge College
19. Mr Nicholas Herd	Westville Boy's High School
20. Ms Emma Johansson	St John's College, Jhb

“Achievement for School in Botswana”

There were three students from Maru-A-Pula School in Gaborone, Botswana, who featured amongst the Top 15 winners! Ms Nandini Kochar who was placed 14th said, “When I saw the book I thought, ‘I have to read this’. Each story had a running theme of a transformation or metamorphosis of either prejudice or social beliefs and ideas.”

The 2015 competition drew more than 80,000 Home Language and First Additional Language (FAL) entries from 400 schools throughout South Africa and from Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique. The prize-giving ceremony held in Grahamstown on 16 July 2015 acknowledged and celebrated the 31 year partnership between the SACEE English Olympiad and De Beers. The company, which is a significant supporter of education, has been closely associated with the English Olympiad since 1985.

The theme for the 2016 English Olympiad is ‘A journey into darkness: Excerpts from stories exploring the darker side of human nature’. The Anthology entitled “The Darkness in Man’s Heart” includes excerpts from well-known novels. The written examination will take place on Tuesday 1 March 2016 and the results will be announced in July 2016.

If you have any comments on this issue of ‘SACEE News’ please contact the editor – Miss Patricia Bootland, SACEE National Office, P O Box 2074, Link Hills, 3652. Tel/Fax 031 776 4185 . E-mail ‘sacee@iburst.co.za’.