

NEWSLETTER: VOLUME 28 ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER 2025

FROM THE EDITORS DESK



🎉 2026 has been a year buzzing with exciting school festivals and special events. After jam-packed second and third school terms festivals, our year ended with two successful events, SADASA's first ever Primary School Showcase at Westville Senior Primary. Then a week later, we held the annual Bruce Piper Award Monologue Competition at St Anne's Diocesan College. This prestigious high school event is in its 22nd year. We completed our last festivals in November, just before fourth term exam fever struck. We can smell the holidays 🎅

Rosanne



🎭 SADASA SHOWCASE 2025

On Saturday, 18 October 2025, SADASA held its first ever Primary School Showcase. 174 talented and excited learners from 48 participating schools across KwaZulu Natal converged at Westville Senior Primary School for an unforgettable morning.

Our young stars shone brightly, delighting a supportive audience. We were entertained by these up-and-coming stars, seeing outstanding potential in our young performers.

We thank the teachers and parents who attended the event.

This event would not have been possible without the generosity of SADASA committee members, SADASA adjudicators and SADASA convenor, Mrs Julia Knowler from Chelsea Preparatory, who all gave up their Saturday to assist on the morning, lining up children, managing the stage, pouring tea for our thirsty supporters and to MC the event.

We are so grateful to Westville Senior Primary, Mrs Patsy Pillay (Acting Principal), Mrs Cheryl Nyman and staff at Westville who helped on the day and invited us to occupy their hall and beautiful campus for the day.

Learners showcase their talents

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THE Speech and Drama Association of South Africa (SADASA) hosted its first ever Primary School Showcase on Saturday, October 18.

The showcase at Westville Senior Primary School featured 48 schools with 172 children flaunting their talents.

82nd birthday

This year marks the association's 82nd birthday and the festivals are normally held at schools throughout KZN.

According to SADASA festival director Rosanne Hurly-Coyne, adjudicators are sent to the schools to conduct assessments. "We felt as an organisation that it would be a wonderful opportunity for children from our schools to showcase their talents and watch other children nominated who showed outstanding promise at their school festivals."

Established in 1943 by Elizabeth Sneddon, the association's purpose is to develop communication skills among South African youth, promoting effective interpersonal communication as a vital educational tool.

Hurly-Coyne said the festivals are an annual, non-competitive event aimed at helping learners improve their speech and communication skills through creative and educational activities.

She explained that the festivals are held during the school term (dates chosen by the school).

"They are open to all children, with no requirement for formal drama training,

and online (virtual adjudication), and participation averages 40 000 children from 115 schools annually.

"The syllabus is updated every three years. It is available in English, Afrikaans, and isiZulu. It covers both individual and group work. Categories include poetry, prose, sight reading, storytelling, monologues, PowerPoint presentations, public speaking, mime, choral verse, theme programmes and dramatic movement."

Hurly-Coyne added that SADASA is a registered NPO and is funded mainly through entry fees and member subscriptions.

"Fees are kept minimal to ensure accessibility for all children."



Westville Senior Primary School learners Ruth Chiswick and

The Wykeham Collegiate's Faye and Anetta Muller

Emily Dennekamp from Winston Park Primary School with brother William Dennekamp, Highbury

Atholl Heights Primary School learner, Hannah Scheepers, and Rosanne Hurly-Coyne.

SADASA vice-chairman Mangle Marneick and SADASA chairman Dr Mervyn McMurtry.



THE 22ND BRUCE PIPER AWARD MONOLOGUE COMPETITION AT ST ANNE'S DIOCESAN COLLEGE

This year 19 participants from 7 high schools attended the 22nd Bruce Piper Award Monologue Competition on Saturday, 25 October 2025 at St Anne's Diocesan College. The standard of work presented was extremely high. Participants enjoyed meeting fellow talented thespians and performing on the beautiful St Anne's Diocesan Theatre stage.

Adjudicators, Dr Mervyn McMurtry and Mrs Dawn Haynes praised participants for their natural talent and dedication to live theatre.

Shannon Turner from St Anne's Diocesan College won the competition for her performance of the character Azra Al Jamal from the play *At her feet* by Nadia Davids, and Gotshego Sachane from St Anne's Diocesan College was Runner-Up for her performance of Sarafina from the play *Sarafina* by Mbongeni Ngema.

SADASA is extremely grateful to St Anne's Diocesan College management, Mrs Debbie Martin, College Head, Mrs Lynn Chemaly, the Theatre Manager and Mrs Joslyn Anderson, Head of Dramatic Arts for their support and making it possible for SADASA to use this picturesque venue.



Bruce Piper Monologue participants at St Anne's Diocesan College



SADASA BURSARIES 2025 🎭

Each year SADASA awards tuition bursaries to learners who show outstanding potential. Recipients of our bursaries are given the opportunity to attend private Speech and Drama classes with a qualified Speech and Drama practitioner.

Congratulations:-

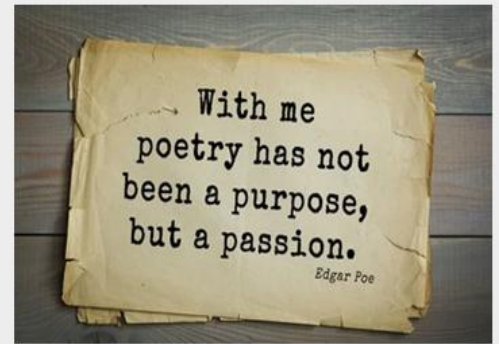
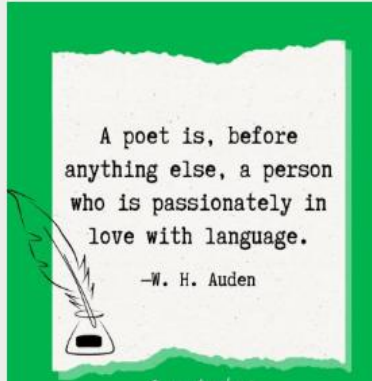
- ★ Frank Walker - D.P.H.S (sponsored by D.P.H.S)
- ★ Kirav Maharaj - Westville Senior Primary
- ★ Siphosethu Zondo - Westville Senior Primary
(sponsored by Westville Senior Primary)
- ★ Johan Koegelenberg - Chelsea Preparatory
(The SADASA Elizabeth Sneddon bursary)
- ★ Ezekhethelo Sokhabase - Glenmore Primary
(The SADASA Hazel Meyer bursary)
- ★ Thandekiso More - St James Private Primary
(The SADASA Jillian Hurst bursary)





MEET OUR POETS

The SADASA syllabus with suggested poems has received great reviews from our member schools. Ever wondered who some of the poets are behind the witty and current poems that capture our childrens' imagination? Our poets come from varied walks of life and places. Some poems are from fellow South African poets, while others are international poets. Five of our local South Africa poets share some insight into what inspires them to keep writing.



MEET LIZE SEELE

Poetry in the current syllabus includes:- Baby Brain, Fruit Salad in the Sky, Granny's Marbles, Koeksister, Lice on the loose, Mum's Diet, My Friend Rattex, Potjie Pot Prattle, Samoosa, South African Selfie, Tooth Mouse Moola, TV Tussels, Ubuntu, Vuvuzela, Woza Weekend and Zoom Granny.

Liza Seele lives on a timber farm near Baynesfied, KwaZulu-Natal with her husband Ben and children Hannah, Lucie and Liam.

Liza writes:-

"In between ferrying a bazillion kids around as Mom's Taxi, I started churning out poems for my own children's school, Cowan House in Hilton, for almost every occasion. Popular demand led me towards pursuing my passion for writing.

I was once an engineer and now I'm an *imagineer*. I love to inspire kids and adults to find light and laughter in both the small

and big things. Rhymes that resonate with kids and make them belly-laugh and their eyes sparkle need to be about kids' stuff. Simple. My poems are filled with rhyming verses about school antics, fierce teachers, rats, lice, baked beans, grannies on Zoom and crazy mums and dads."





MEET ANDREW PENDER-SMITH

Poetry in the current syllabus includes:- Happiest in the Hood, How to become a Bright Spark, I Absolutely Love It, I'm A, Mad in the Taxi, Mad Mean Machine, Munch, Crunch - Lunch!, Not all the World's Asleep, The Pink and Purple Dinosaur, The Star of the Show.

Andrew Pender-Smith lives in Westville, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. He writes:-

"I have written poetry for performance for over forty years and hope to be writing poems for many more. I first started writing poetry for theme programmes and choral verse when I began teaching Speech and Drama in the early 1980s. It was about 1983, when I was doing a theme programme about the sea with a drama group, that I could not find a suitable poem for their choral verse. I wrote a poem simply called 'The Waves.' Some months later, in 1984, I wrote a poem titled 'The Big Time Boogaloo'. I found that the children I was teaching at the time enjoyed these and other poems I'd written, and I began writing more poetry.

In 2007, long-time teacher, and adjudicator for SADASA, Di Paterson, approached me about writing some poems for the SADASA syllabus. I was keen to do so. As well as submitting some of my older poems, I also produced a few newer ones. These included 'The Best Taxi in Town'. I wrote this poem while sitting in a flat in Muscat in Oman, and though I was so far away, many of the sights, sounds and scents of South Africa, especially Durban, came to me as I wrote.

Over the years, I have had more than thirty poems included in the SADASA syllabus, and I get a thrill whenever I hear that a class or an individual student has enjoyed one or more of them.

I hear that a class or an individual student has enjoyed one or more of them.

In case you're wondering, the picture of the furry individual in a library is of Sebastian de Vervet, my occasional alter ego and writing sidekick. When it comes to having our photos taken, he always stands in for me because he is much better-looking.

Long may SADASA continue its valuable work. Thank you for encouraging me as a writer."





MEET PAM COUPERTHWAITE

Poetry in the current syllabus includes:- *Aerial Attack*, *Playmate* and *Shadows*

Pam Couperthwaite writes:-

"I live in a place called Riet River Mouth, near Port Alfred, in the Eastern Cape. My house overlooks the Riet River and on the far bank of the river, is a farmland and we see Bushbuck, Nyala, Warthog and sometimes the cows that come down to the river to drink. The sea is close by. We have pristine beaches with fine sand, rocky outcrops, where at low tide one can see the sealife trapped in the pools. I wrote a poem about Riet River called: *The Other Eden*, because the place is like paradise.

Sitting on a bench on the river bank, I witnessed how a cormorant wanted to grab a gosling of the Egyptian Goose family. The cormorant approached like a submarine and disappeared under water to escape the drake with his strong beak and wide wings. This made me want to write *Aerial Attack*. I remember seeing newsreels of Spitfire planes attacking ships and submarines in World War 2.

In *Playmate* I saw how disappointed the young boy was when his mother came home with his new, baby sister, who was small, helpless and not much fun. His father bought home a puppy to be the boy's playmate until Suzi got bigger.

There is not shadow unless there is light. As a child, I watched my shadow jump, run, wave, grow bigger, smaller and likened these images to the Rites of Passage. At the end of one's life, the light goes out and the shadow is gone.

I enjoy the challenge of writing poetry: rhythm, rhyme, images and recording one's thoughts inspired by an event or one's own thoughts.

I now learn the poems I like or find. I enjoy learning poems and understanding the poet's meaning and intention. I recite the poems to the cat, my adjudicator. He falls asleep so I get a zzz rating!"





MEET DIANNE STEWART

Poetry in the current syllabus includes the popular poem, *Coffee Partner*.

Dianne Stewart lives in Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal. She writes:-

"I love writing rhyming and free verse poetry and am so delighted that some of it is included in SADASA'S festival syllabai. I have been writing poetry from a young age and in my youth was enrolled in the Majorie Gilbey studio of Speech and Drama. I went on to study Speech and Drama at Rhodes University.

I've published 50 books and in 2023 was made a South African Children's Laureate, recognising my contribution to children's literature and for helping to get books into the hands of all readers.

I now teach creative writing at the University of Cape Town Summer School."



MEET PATRICIA DEVENISH

Poetry in the current syllabus includes:- *Fruity Tooty*, *On Wakening*, *Sarah Swimming*, *The Kingfisher* and *The Nonsense Poem of the Fryingpan with a Leak*.

Patricia Devenish lives in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. She writes:-

"I wrote my first poem when I was about nine years old. I lived in Johannesburg where it is really cold in winter and my poem was entitled "Winter." The first two lines read,

Here comes Winter, bitter icy cold,

Riding in his chariot, O so bold,

My father kept a handwritten copy of this poem for years but it eventually got lost. At primary school we were given poems to learn off by heart. I also attended elocution lessons with more poetry to learn off by heart for speech exams and performances. Much of it was by traditional poets like Walter de la Mare, William Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti, Lewis Carroll and Shakespeare. Influenced then by the poems I was given to learn, I wrote poems which rhymed and had regular metre and rhythm.

At high school I was introduced to free verse and modern poetry and I began to write poems without rhyme or regular metre. While studying to be a teacher at Wits University, I had a poem published in the College's magazine in 1958. It was about Hillbrow, a suburb where I lived.

Often I write a poem after I've had an experience that has moved me deeply. In a way the poem is an attempt to preserve that moment in which I observed something, experienced it myself or heard about it.

The poem *Sarah Swimming* began late one afternoon when I noticed someone swimming in the school pool. It was Sarah, training for the Paralympics and I was touched by the grace and elegance of her movements in the water, so different to the problems she experienced on land. I was also deeply saddened. The rhythm of her strokes stayed in the back of my mind over the next few days and gradually I became aware of the poem taking shape in my mind. I got snatches of phrases and lines in my mind. I then felt the need to write these down, which I did quickly, not stopping to correct or check. I put the piece of paper away and took it out a few days later. I began to re-write, rephrase, change lines around, look for better words, cut out what was not necessary. I read the poem aloud - and did all this over and over again until I was satisfied that the poem was complete. Sometimes it takes a long time to write a poem, occasionally the process is quicker.

Every poet writes poetry in his or her own way. I can't tell anyone how to write poetry. There are rules for writing sonnets and ballads and these can be learnt. I can suggest someone change a word, re-phrase a line or consider another metaphor. Finally, the poet makes his or her own decision.

Teachers need to read poetry to their learners and encourage them to learn poems by heart and recite them for the class. A poem in your heart stays there forever.

To young poets, read as many poems as you can aloud. Take part in poetry festivals and enter your poems for competitions. Show your work only to those whom you trust. Keep a book (and when one book is full, start another) where you write down or paste all the final copies of your poems. And date them. You will treasure these books in years to come when you become famous poets."





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♥ SADASA CONNECTS WITH LOVE HOWICK ♥

As an NPO, SADASA is always delighted when another NPO reaches out and asks to connect with them.

On Thursday 18 September Rosanne Hurly-Coyne attended *Love Howick's* Literacy Festival held in Mphohomeni, Howick, KwaZulu-Natal. It was a privilege to meet *Love Howick* coordinators of the Mphohomeni Primary Schools project, Wendy Dladla and Nqobile Zuma.

The festival was a happy and vibrant occasion. SADASA looks forward to working with *Love Howick* and the communities they serve in the future.





A TRIBUTE TO IDA GARTRELL

SADASA is deeply saddened by the sudden passing in September this year of popular SADASA adjudicator, Ida Gartrell.

Ida has had connections with SADASA for more than 50 years. She was a well known Speech and Drama teacher on the North Coast, teaching at various schools and had her own Speech and Drama studio in Eshowe, where she mentored many young people.

This year she facilitated a highly successful teacher skills workshop at North Coast Primary School. In the last few months before she passed away, she travelled to Northland Private School in St Lucia and Melmoth Combined to adjudicate their SADASA festivals. She adjudicated Eshowe Junior School's festival a week before she passed away.

Ida always exuded so much energy, and many of us will remember her for her creative story telling workshops. Her commitment to the Performing Arts and her students will be felt by those lives she touched for many years to come.

We extend our condolences to Ida's son, family members and special friends. She will be remembered with much fondness and appreciation.





THANK YOU 🙏

SADASA would not have enjoyed such a successful year without the support we receive from so many people and organisations.

We thank Concord Trust for their generous distribution to SADASA in February 2025.

Thank you Fenella Rivalland and Loud Crowd Media for all they do to maintain our website, marketing assistance and coming to our rescue for countless 'IT' issues.

We thank our team of highly skilled and experienced SADASA adjudicators including:- Shika Budhoo, Cathie Brooks-Neill, Sharon Carby, Les Coull, Tracy Deeb, Ida Gartrell, Dawn Harrison, Dawn Haynes, Rosanne Hurly-Coyne, Danita Kliem, Tracy Laubscher, Margie Marnewick, Mervyn McMurtry, Barbie Meyer, Mbali Nguse, Carmen O'Donoghue, Di Paterson, Philippa Savage, Carla Tate, Carien Wandrag and Mthu Zulu.



WISHING YOU A PEACEFUL FESTIVE SEASON 🎉

The holidays have finally arrived and we know what a precious time of year it is for all our SADASA festival convenors.

🎁 The SADASA committee has decided not to increase fees in 2026 to encourage more children to enter items at our festivals.

On behalf of our SADASA Chairman, Dr Mervyn McMurtry, and the SADASA team we wish all SADASA friends a safe, restful and joyful festive season with family and friends.

Whatever you do, wherever you go, enjoy every moment. See you in 2026 for an even more exciting year!



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