

## **eGGSA Newsletter**

**No. 1: July, 2007**

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### ***From the Editor:***

Welcome to the first issue of the eGGSA newsletter!

The eGGSA team has been actively discussing a number of issues that have been raised in member surveys. One of these is member communications, and it was suggested we should have a newsletter. I, Keith Meintjes, volunteered to edit such a newsletter.

The purpose of the newsletter is better communications with the members. It will in future be published quarterly in February, May, August, and November, about mid-month. Contents will include news about the branch and our parent society, GSSA; news about members; and tips, hints, and other items of interest. The newsletter will not include genealogy articles.

Member suggestions and contributions are welcome. In particular, I would like to feature Member Profiles, where we will publish short biographies of particular members and their interests.

Over time, I hope the newsletter will also serve as a record of decisions made on issues facing the Branch, and will document our norms - how we choose to do our business. The newsletter will be made available to other branches of GSSA (to distribute as they see fit), and past editions will be archived on the eGGSA web site.

Above all, this newsletter is for the members of eGGSA. If you have any suggestions, comments, or contributions, please send me an e-mail.

Keith Meintjes  
[umfundi@usa.net](mailto:umfundi@usa.net)

### **Internet Discussion Lists**

eGGSA does not have its own mailing list or bulletin board, and we do not recommend or endorse any particular one. However, these resources are an incredibly powerful way to "kick start" your research, particularly in areas that are new to you.

You can find links to some of the lists on the eGGSA site: [http://www.eggasa.org/links\\_e.htm](http://www.eggasa.org/links_e.htm)

If you are interested in a particular surname or locality, take a look at the Rootsweb Bulletin Boards: <http://boards.rootsweb.com/Default.aspx> Rootsweb is, however, heavily weighted to the USA and Great Britain.

## **Archives Photo Service**

The eGGSA's Archives Photo service is proving to be a great success. We have had many positive responses on the quality of the images and the price of the service.

The only negative comments have been on the timeliness of the service. In my own experience, it takes about eight weeks for a large order (about 15 documents, about 60 pages). We should remember that the service rests on the volunteer efforts of Annelie Els, Johan Ahlers, and others, and that those dead people in the Archives are not going to move any time soon!

The photo service now includes all four of the major Archives Depots – Pietermaritzburg (NAB), Cape Town (KAB), Bloemfontein (VAB) and Pretoria (TAB).

Also, the service is now offered to all, including non-members of eGGSA or GSSA. For Members, the price will remain the same. Non-Members will be charged double.

eGGSA is also trying to extend the service to the various Master's offices, so that more recent Estates are available. Stay tuned!

Here is a typical comment, recently posted on one of the discussion lists:

*"I know that many of you may be concerned about time delays, but do you know that all this work is done by volunteers who have lives of their own and do this work for nothing - often at their own expense of getting to the archives and back. They often have to wait in queues or during strikes.*

*"The cost is minimal and due to the nature of the work they do the service they provide you also ensure that records will be available for future generations and others accessing the eGGSA site.*

*"I urge you to donate copies of graves and documents you have photographed to add to this important collection."*

## **eGGSA Website: Members' Section**

Members have special access to certain parts of the eGGSA website, [www.eggasa.org](http://www.eggasa.org). For example, you can download this year's editions of genesis and Familia.

When logged in, you also have the capability to add comments on items in the Download Library. For example, you could add information concerning a gravestone.

A UserID and password were sent by Colin Pretorius in an e-mail on 14 May, 2007.

## **eGGSA Projects**

An interesting aspect of our last "election" of officers is that candidates were much more interested in contributing to projects than they were in becoming titled officers of eGGSA. This is, perhaps, a reflection that our recent projects have been very successful.

Gail Röthlin spearheaded an effort to index thousands of gravestone photographs in a few short weeks. The results are part of an incredible resource, for all, on the eGSSA site.

Richard Ball received an award from GSSA. Among his accomplishments is the MOOC 13/1/1 CD of early estates. This effort will continue with the publication of other "endangered" Archives volumes.

### **GSSA – The National Executive Committee**

#### ***Elected Members:***

President: Johann J van Rensburg

Vice-President: Isabel Groesbeek

Secretary: Elmien Wood

Treasurer: André Heydenrych

Add. Member: Dennis Pretorius

#### ***Co-opted members:***

Editor of Familia: Richard Y Ford

Editor and compiler of Omnibus: Daan Hamman (assistance from Faan Pistor)

Technology: Paul Maré

Cemetery Project Co-ordinator: Fanie Blignaut

### **GSSA – Annual Meeting**

The President's report to the 2007 Annual Meeting is included as the last item in this newsletter. The next (45th) Annual Meeting will be hosted by the North West Branch on 1 March 2008.

All members may make nominations for the various GSSA awards, including "Genealogist of the Year". The meeting is also an opportunity to provide feedback and to propose projects and activities that GSSA should be involved with

### **Uit die notule van die Nasionale Uitvoerende Komitee van die GGSA, 5 Mei 2007:**

Dank aan Peter en Beverley Moss vir hul volgehoue bydraes.

Johann [Janse van Rensburg] bedank Peter en Beverley vir hul werk aan die Begraafplaasprojek en vra verskoning dat 'n kompakskyf nie uit dank aan hulle oorhandig is nie.

Kompakskywe sal vervolgens aan almal oorhandig word wat 'n wesentlike bydrae tot die projek gelewer het.

Wes-Kaap boedelprojek

Hierdie projek is tans dormant as gevolg van die afwesigheid van 'n projekteier.

## NAAIRS Searches: Volumes and Document Numbers

Although it is not always reliable, you can search NAAIRS on document numbers, and you can compile a table of contents for a particular volume.

For example, KAB CJ 2649 is Wills from the years 1686 - 1708. Enter the search terms as follows:

Search Words (Insert one or more SearchWords)	Operators
KAB	And
CJ	And
2649	And
	And

You will locate 185 documents. The first few are:

SRCE	VOL	REF	DESCRIPTION	BEGIN	END
CJ	2649	1	VLOCK, JAN HENDRICK. TESTAMENT.	1686	1686
CJ	2649	1	JANSZ, MARIA. TESTAMENT.	1686	1686
CJ	2649	2	VAN NORDEN, ESDRID ANDRIESZ. TESTAMENT.	1686	1686
CJ	2649	3	SCHRYVER, ISAK. TESTAMENT.	1686	1686
CJ	2649	3	HOECK, ANNA. TESTAMENT.	1686	1686
CJ	2649	4	WYKKART, JAN. TESTAMENT.	1687	1687
CJ	2649	5	SANDELIJN, CORNELIS JACOBSZ. TESTAMENT.	1687	1687
CJ	2649	6	STEK, CORNELIS. TESTAMENT.	1689	1689
CJ	2649	7	VAN BREUGEL, ALBERT. TESTAMENT.	1687	1687
CJ	2649	8	SANDELIJN, CORNELIS JACOBSZ. TESTAMENT.	1687	1687
CJ	2649	9	BOTMA, JAN STEVENSZ. TESTAMENT.	1687	1687
CJ	2649	10	VAN DER GRAGT, AGNETA. TESTAMENT.	1688	1688
CJ	2649	10	ROOTSTEEN, JACOB MATZEN. TESTAMENT.	1688	1688
CJ	2649	11	HENDRIKZ, CLAAS. TESTAMENT.	1689	1689
CJ	2649	12	WITVOET, FRANCOIJS. TESTAMENT.	1689	1689
CJ	2649	13	BOTMA, STEVEN JANSZ. TESTAMENT.	1689	1689
CJ	2649	13	HENDRIKZ, HENDRINA. TESTAMENT.	1689	1689

This is, I think, useful in a couple of ways. First, you are not guessing at possible variations in the spelling of names. Second, you can identify couples: REF 3 above is for Isak SCHRYVER and Anna HOECK. This is a joint will, and we can presume they were married.

A related tip: If you have a document, search on the reference\*. You may turn up the name of a spouse. For example, Henning Husing was Adam Tas' uncle. His will is KAB CJ 2649 28. A search (including "28") yields:

SRCE	VOL	REF	DESCRIPTION	BEGIN	END
CJ	2649	28	HUSING, HENNING. TESTAMENT.	1691	1691
CJ	2649	28	LINDENHOVIUS, MARIA. TESTAMENT.	1691	1691

Be prepared for some unpredictable results. I tried to make an index for the eGGSA CD, MOOC 13/1/1.

A search on

MOOC  
13/1/1

yields no results. A search on

MOOC  
13  
1  
1

yields 190938 results, the system overflows, and none can be displayed.

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\* Older document numbers may not be correct, for the Archives' indexing systems have changed over the years.

### **Some interesting links**

The West Gauteng branch of GSSA has a blog-style newsletter at <http://www.westggsa.blogspot.com/>

The National Archives of the United Kingdom site is <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/> and you can sign up for their electronic newsletter: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/enewsletter/>

### **Genealogical Society of South Africa – President's Annual Report** *Report to the National Annual General Meeting – 24 February 2007* *For the year March 2006 to February 2007*

Good morning to all the members of the National Council, Fellow Genealogists, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to start off by wishing all a very prosperous 2007, and I hope that you will be able to work towards your dreams in general and your genealogical ambitions in particular. The year 2006 was no less challenging than 2005. We have just about fully come to grips with the tasks of managing the GSSA, and here special thanks must go to all the members of the NEC and all the branch committees. Without your effort and dedication, very little would have happened during 2006.

There is however a number of areas where the NEC and the branches need to focus. We should fully embark on getting the processes within each branch established to build and maintain our web site and our web database. We are still not organising mid-year Strategic planning sessions, and it

shows, because we are embarking on very few new initiatives. The NEC also does not get together often enough. We only met four times during the 2006-year. Although Isabel carried the torch with pride regarding interviews on radio (and I really feel that she did an excellent job in promoting the GSSA), I feel that there is other PR work that also needs attention, which I did not get to. My aim is to use 2007 to strengthen ties with the national archives, societies like the Huguenot Society, Cultural museums and family history societies. Every cultural museum and library should know about the GSSA.

However, better communication should start at home. My impression is that the NEC did enjoy fairly open communication towards the branches, but that the branches could still do more about keeping the NEC in the loop with activities at branch level.

I am certain that there are areas in the country that should be mined more aggressively to see if we cannot establish new branches in areas like Kimberley/Northern Cape, the Far North and Mpumalanga, and even East London and the southern Cape Peninsula. More promotional articles should be written and published in popular magazines and/or newspapers.

On the flip side, I feel we did have a couple of highs during the year:

- The Cemetery CD is being produced again (thank you to Peter Moss and his team)
- We re-appointed a selection committee for looking after allocating our awards.
- The Omnibus has received major attention (thank you to Daan Hamman)
- The second edition of the Member CD is ready for distribution
- The Free State Marriages has been reformatted and is available, although more about that later
- We lived through a full cycle of closing one branch and seeing a new branch come to the fore
- We've seen a new concept regarding our web-site take shape (a huge thank you to Paul Maré in this regard)
- A great effort was put into maintaining contact between the NEC and the branches
  - o Bloemfontein was visited by Johann just before the branch was founded as well as by Daan during the 'Volksbladfees'
  - o Western Gauteng was visited by Johann
  - o Northern Transvaal was visited by Johann
  - o North West was visited by Isabel, André and Richard
  - o Natal Midlands branch was visited by André
  - o The NEC was in regular contact with the e-GSSA
  - o The Vaal Triangle attended most of the NEC meetings
  - o Johann attended two meetings in the Western Cape

During 2006 our membership has grown from 786 to 877 paid up members. Our flagship Familia has gone from strength to strength as well, by increasing the number of pages from 188 in 2005 to 196 in 2006 plus increasing the readership from 918 in to 1029 during the same period – a total increase of 111 (12%) for the year. Here thanks must go to Richard Ford and his team and André Heydenrych for keeping such tight control on the memberships and the moneys.

So, if we did have some measure of success during 2006 it was because the majority of the suggestions that were made by the members of the National Council (NC) were not just made and left for someone else to run with. No, we had enthusiasts who made the suggestion, streamlined the idea with other people's inputs, got approval and then initiated and implemented those ideas

themselves. This is what makes an organisation dynamic, vibrant and alive, and this is what I would like us all to carry into the New Year. We should continue to strive to be an organisation that impacts the genealogical world in innovative, grand and exciting new ways.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish us all an enterprising 2007 and may we find at least some of those long lost relatives.

Johann Janse van Rensburg