



## OP Village Traditions

*Written by Sarah Biesman-Simons and Cecilia van der Walt of OP Village*

*The original Huis Onderstepoort building is now referred to as Old Res, which is still a male-only corridor. The area that used to be the student-run library is now used as a lounge and dance floor and quickly reaches maximum capacity during a World Cup rugby match. After each jol, there are sure to be groups of people chatting and relaxing on the balcony. The funds generated from their annual Crocodile Fest and Beerfest are used to host children from a nearby children's home for a braai, campus tour and games day. The boys of Old Res go away on an annual camp weekend and their annual 'Huisdans' or 'Dinee' always proves to have an interesting theme with even better outfits. The boys also have a Ginbleton day against Helshoogte where the tennis is grand and the gin always flowing.*

### Early days

In the 50s, there were 20 students in a class with only a single female. Classes took place across the road at what is now the ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute. All of the exams were orals, and everyone would wait at the circle in front of Old Res for the last student to finish his or her oral and return with everyone's marks. During these years, there would also be dances arranged annually by each year group in the Old Res dining hall. That's a lot of dances!

Dr Lente van der Merwe (class of 1957) was one of few with a bicycle, which would often be 'borrowed' by students in a rush to get back to res on a Friday afternoon. One Friday afternoon her bicycle was nowhere to be found...until one of her classmates discovered it on top of the Old Res chimney!

Rally, one of the most popular traditions of OP Village today, started in the 50s. What started as a race with a variety of challenges and time limits along the way, is nowadays one of students piling into the back of decorated trailers which haul them between farms in the area. It is a day of swimming in dams and under bridges and floating along rivers. The final stop at the bridge above the highway always proves to be a spectacle for the drivers below... The students used to put a braai on the back of one of the bakkies, a tradition which quickly ended after it toppled over one year. In another year, one of the students couldn't find his way back to OP, and decided to drive back on the railroad, miraculously making it back to OP in one piece!

### The 70s

Moving into the 70s, OP used to have a 9-hole golf course and annual golf days were a proud tradition. Unfortunately, with new roads and the expansion of the residence, it has since been removed. Another tradition that began then is OP Concerts. We suspect this has become an annual Res Awards Evening with live music and

poetry performances by students. Another tradition from the 70s is the Belonje Report, a very scientific-looking questionnaire that contained one significant question. The conclusion drawn: sexual activity decreased as you got older. With the arrival of female vet students in res came the Sperm Skerm (translated to mean sperm shield). This was a security gate placed in the C block between the male and female sides of the corridor. However, it did not stop the two from mingling.

Med vs vet started out as a rugby game between the two faculties in the '70s, and we often catapulted black eggs at the med students. It has since transformed into a classic 'OP jol'!

### Rag Parades (Jool)

The Rag parades took place from the main campus to Church Square. Some OP floats were made (mostly by the second and third years) to hide booze, while others were made to look inconspicuous so that we could join the parade, only to reveal various forms of inappropriate images after it began. Some floats were filled with truckloads of manure which was thrown at people. Another float in the late 1970s was a 'surgical demonstration' with surgical drapes and real sheep organs with a student in the front explaining the surgery with radiographs.

Every year, the OP students had to climb to the top of the Paul Kruger statue, and every year they would spray shaving cream onto various people (whether it be the mayor, his wife, or the vice chancellor...). In another year the Opiates decided to try and stop the whole procession. They yelled "DEAD ANTS", which was the cue for everyone to drop to the floor with their arms and legs in the air, forcing all the floats and cars behind them to stop. Needless to say, we were eventually banned from the RAG parades, but it was a good few years before we stopped showing up anyway. The RAG Nappy Parade was a tradition that took place from the 70s to the 90s.

## OP Res Traditions

An old tradition was to hang on the second floor gutters and try to make your way around Old Res. It was banned because the gutters were bending...nevermind the two-story drop.

OP's first drinking club, Club 21, started in 1977. Bull's Horn is where they hold their meetings and keep their archives. The wall has a list of the members of the club as well as each year's Arthur (the chairperson of the club). We would love to tell you more, but what happens in Club 21 stays in Club 21 and its little black book.

Miss OP started in the 80s and ended in the 2000s. Those who got to witness it know that seeing the guys parading up and down dressed up as girls ensured a night full of laughter and fun.

Ysbokjol is now known as OP On Ice and is a tradition still going strong. It used to take place at the Kolonnade ice rink but has since moved to The Grove. This consists of vet students racing around on the ice in greens and gumboots...what could possibly go wrong? (except of course the yearly injuries and hospital visits). Nevertheless, a couple of hours of music, games, shopping trolleys and sliding around always proves to be a treat.

Many traditions started in the 90s and ended in the early 2000s, including the Mafa Evening, Minators Drinking Club, Taverns of the World, Foam Party, and the Braai Competition (the latter being an excuse to braai the most revolting food as the lecturers were obligated to taste it all to choose a winner).

With the only drinking club at OP being solely for boys, the girls decided to make their own group in 1993. They were nicknamed Fan Club by the boys and their logo at the time was an upside-down club as an ode to Club 21.

They quickly became known as Club 12 but it wasn't long until they chose their current name, Catz, a haven for all the "animal loving, wine drinking, jol going" girls of Onderstepoort. They now have meetings in Koei se Gat where the names of cats, Queen Cats (chairperson of the group) and Funnel Masters are written over the walls. The 'Catz shanty' goes as follows:

*Two pints of beer, a fine and that's your bloody lot*

*Heading down to Koei se Gat to take another shot*

*So putting on our painted pinks, We'll go out for some more*

*Cause a Catz girl's just a Catz girl if she's passed out on the floor*

In 1996, the 100s Club was started by the Arthur of Club 21 at the time. The challenge was a part of the welcoming week and involved drinking 100 shots of beer in 100 minutes. This is still hosted annually by Club 21 and Catz with some new rules along the way. However, anyone can join in on the fun and see how far they get.

## A New Era

The start of the new century brought the start of many new traditions: Pot en Pons (now called FITS (Fun In The Sun)), Wine Tasting, Barn Dance, 10-in-1, Rainbow Party, Kinky Pinky Tightey Whitey, and the second year vet students started being called NoVs and later NewVs.

As with most of the events on the OP calendar, their start is somewhat of a mystery, but we would love to learn more if you know some of the stories!

Serrie started in 2004, the annual showcase where the residences, houses and faculties battled it out to find the ultimate winner based on their singing, dancing, band, and story. This highly anticipated competition is now known as Step It Up.

Alcatraz, a girl's corridor that named itself after the famous prison, started in 2005. Their members are nicknamed 'inmates' and the chairperson their 'warden'. It used to include the entire B block but was later limited to the B2 corridor (Alcatraz's main corridor), B2 extension (AKA Dithering) and the first two rooms of C2 (AKA isolation cells). Alcatraz has since expanded to include ladies throughout our residence, with their 'cells' now indicated with a mugshot on the door. When 'Poison' by Alice Cooper is played, you can be sure that all the inmates will be singing along to their anthem. Some of the yearly traditions include the conjugal visits from the NewV boys (their cheeky way of meeting the new arrivals), games evenings, pool days, movie nights, cocktail competitions, sip and paints, pool competitions, yoga sessions, karaoke evenings, bowls days, bull riding nights and their informal events.

Helshoogte started in Block C3 in 2007. A group of girls decided that they wanted to attend Res events and enjoy activities such as Ginbledon vs Old Res, camp weekends, karaoke nights, baking competitions, pool days, NewV 'ken mekaar', and an Annual Dinee. At the Dinee the new Hells Angels (the two new ladies in charge) get announced. In the C3 corridor, there is a HelshOOGTE and HelSLAAGTE area where the highs and the lows of the Hellsies are captured with photos on the walls. The corridor is always decorated and made to feel like a home away from home. Most Helshoogte festivities start with some crackling and candy floss. Their other traditions include the Helshoogte jacket, blue lips and the Helshoogte whistle.

The Naked Calendar started as a fundraising initiative in 2007. What better way to raise money for charity than vets posing in gumboots...and nothing else?

Every year, the residents of OP Village gather together to take a 'family photo' in front of the Old Res building. It was in the late 2000s that the tradition of throwing water balloons at everyone during the house photo started, and still continues today.

Corridor Crawl is an annual tradition that started in 2009 when the HC at the time wanted to build up some 'gees' for OP Village. Each corridor has the opportunity to compete based on its theme, decorations, music, general vibe and of course punch. This year, even the house parents joined in on the fun! We were blown away by their décor and their punch was easily voted the winner of the evening.

What was once G block is now referred to as Easy Company, established in 2009. With corridor crawl came the need for a corridor name. The boys got their name from the World War II series 'Band of Brothers' that they were watching at the time. They enjoyed, and often still enjoy, the simple things in life: playing pranks, lawning the NewV corridor, dismantling entire bathrooms, stealing corridor mascots, photobombing the house photo by putting their banner on the roof of Old Res, playing paintball against Old Res, shooting condom water balloons at the NewV girls during the Girl's Rugby, watching movies projected onto the side of Kampala, and serenading Alcatraz on Valentine's day. They also started the Fruit and Veg social night with the veterinary nursing students in protest of Old Res's 'meat market'. The head of the corridor is called the General and their common room is referred to as 'My Pants'.

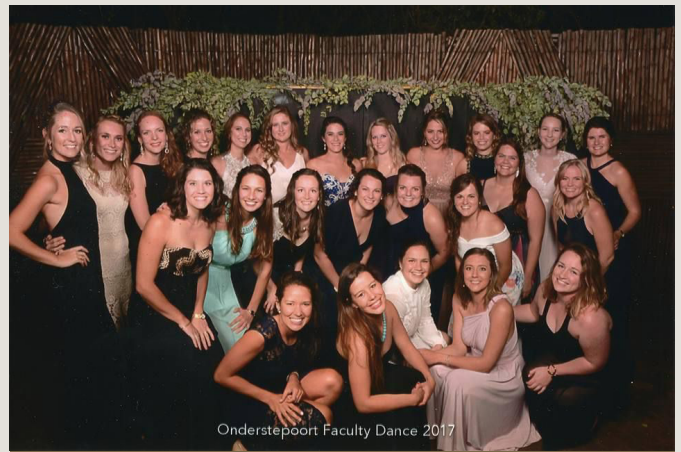


The NewV girls take on the senior girls once a year at the annual rugby game. Of course, it is played fairly, all the rules are obeyed, and the aim is to simply have a great time. There is definitely no advantage with the senior ref, the number of senior players and substitutes and the amount of time for the seniors to practice before the match... definitely not ;-)

Kampala was born when the NewV boys of 2017 were listening to the song Krismis in Kampala and decided that their corridor needed a name. They would organise the PAPs (Post Anatomy parties) and ugly sweater parties. Andrea Rossler put together their logo, which simply consists of items that the boys thought would look good together.

Pegasus is the NewV and New Nurse girl's corridor and was established in 2021 to strengthen the sisterhood among the girls, who are known as Pegasusters. Their logo represents the power and majesty of the group with the purple colour incorporating their creativity and ambition. Their mascot's name is Magna Floodis. "Magna" represents a strong and mighty woman, while "Floodis" pays tribute to the many floods that block D and E endured throughout the founding year. Their song is *Lay All Your Love On Me (remix)*. The Pegasusters organize awards at the NewV and Nurses dance as a way to commemorate a successful year of bonding.

**To paraphrase R I (Bruff) Coubrough (Staff Sports Liaison Officer, 1969): "The Onderstepoort Student's Hostel is somewhat unique in being situated a great distance from the body of the University Campus...The wide diversity of sports [and other social and cultural activities] catered for at Onderstepoort helps in no uncertain manner to maintain a very necessary balance between the academic and recreational program of the student body".**



The annual 'Huisdans' is one of the highlights of the year



Rag parade - An Onderstepoort float from circa 1920s with the characteristic veterinary theme



Each year the end of the Rag parade was concluded by the vet students climbing on top of the Paul Kruger statue on Church Square



The 1977 RAG Nappy Parade



A Mafia revival evening in 2023





The founders of Koei Se Gat: Hylton Lee, Mark Collett, Rainer Hassel (back); Ian van Niekerk, Andre Raff (middle); Francois van Niekerk (front)



Easy Company started the tradition of watching movies projected onto the side of a building



Step It Up has replaced the annual Serrie competition - the 2023 group in action



The band for the 2023 Step It Up showcase



ONDERSTEPSPOORT House photo 2008

Water bombing while taking the 'family photo' in front of Old Res started in late 2000s

