

# NEWSLETTER 28.

OF BIRTHDAYS,  
OF CELEBRATING MY LATE MOTHER,  
ABOUT A SECOND FAMILY GATHERING,  
NEW BOOKS,  
AND  
DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN  
MASIPHUMELE.

MARCH 2016.

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Dear friends,

It's been a while since last I wrote. Herewith updates on matters that have kept me busy. I hope you find this of interest and possibly worthy of a response.

Instead of cluttering your in-box with large file attachments, I invite you to read and view items in full on my website ([www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za](http://www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za)).

1. On 22 November 2015, Christine and I celebrated our birthday's midway between our actual birth dates. We had a wonderful gathering and midday feast with

friends, old and new, on the lawn overlooking False Bay, at the home of our good friends Peter and Solveig Kjeseth.

Christine was nearly 68 and I had already turned 70. The picture was taken on the day.



**2. The death of my mother.** On 29 November 2015, our mother died peacefully in her sleep at the frail-care home in Swakopmund. She was just five months short of turning 100. I was fortunate to visit her a month before her death. She no longer talked much, but she seemed content humming tunes and moving her fingers as though she had a piano before her.

On the website is my memorial essay to her. In it, I try to capture her life and weave into it the times she lived in. This essay will also appear in the next edition of the Swakopmund Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft (Scientific Society)



3. As a further memorial to her, I have created a sequence of photos (annotated) of her life. Mutti, as we called her, was born in Windhoek a year after South African rule replaced German colonial rule. With family photo's I provide some insight into the social and political events that touched her life. The relevant file is on the home page of my website.
4. ***Amraal* (Lambert) is a historical novel by writer Miranda van Zyl. It also sheds new light on the life and times of Zara and Hinrich Schmelen.** Amraal was the Schmelen's ox wagon driver, when trekking north into Great Namaqualand. Amraal is the central character in the book. He most probably was present and witnessed Zara and Hinrich's impromptu marriage en route to Bethany. Amraal was a humane, wise and popular leader and is, not least, associated with Gobabis.

The subsidiary story in the book is that of Zara and Hinrich Schmelen. The author meticulously sticks to

historic fact and where links and connections are absent her poetic license will be clear to the reader.

The book contributes toward re-building the otherwise obliterated Khoi history and suffering. The author looks at her subject from a Khoi rather than colonist viewpoint.

Amraal is written in Afrikaans. If you read Afrikaans, this book comes highly recommended. It is currently short-listed for several literary awards.

The book is published by Tafelberg Publishers ([www.tafelberg.com](http://www.tafelberg.com)). ISBN 978-0-624-07561-5. It is also available as e-book.

**5. A second Schmelen-Kleinschmidt-Uirab family gathering.** From 7-10 April, family from Germany, South Africa and Namibia will be hosted by the Uirab side of the family, in Fransfontein in Northern Namibia. Fransfontein, north of Khorixas, is closely associated with the Swartbooi's and Sabata's, and thus the Uirab's. Discussion about our divided history, our identity beyond the past, celebration and being an encouragement to more South African and Namibian families, informs the gathering.

**6. Masiphumele is a horrid reminder that apartheid is with us to this day. Masiphumele is referred to as a 'township' and still not treated and managed as a 'suburb' by the City of Cape Town. Masi is in our neighbourhood. It is where mostly poor, nearly all Black people, reside. Social barriers, as well as old and new rules, confine them to what is effectively a modern-day ghetto.**

On 29 November 2015, a devastating fire raged through 'C and E Sections' of Masi in an area the City of Cape Town prefers to call a wetland. Of the roughly 15,000 people living in the 'wetland', four thousand five hundred lost their homes; all their possessions and many also lost their identity documents (the consequences of which, in a corrupt administration, are potentially more dire than losing the roof over your head). Nearly four months later their situation remains dire as the City seeks to confine the fire victims into a smaller parcel of land, which, they say, was occupied illegally in the first place. Initially the City purchased land for Masiphumele's expansion, but since has changed its mind. Not-in-my-backyard is the call from surrounding well-to-do suburbs and the City politicians abide. Their hope to stem the tide of urbanisation, prevented for decades under apartheid, finds expression in modern-day terms that disguise on-going discrimination.

Recently, Masi leaders and I lodged a complaint with the South African Human Rights Commission. We charge the City with allowing open sewers to run through the shack housing. Some build their houses on stilts when sewer discharge invades their homes. Most of all children are at risk in this situation.

See both the submission of the complaint laid and the associated photographs on my web page under the heading Ubumelwane (isiXhosa for neighbourhood)

**7. Faith as politics is a book that shines new light on the role of Ds. Beyers Naudé.** The book comprises papers delivered to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> birthdate of

Beyers Naudé, at a conference in Uppsala, Sweden in 2015. In it, Henning Melber draws pertinent parallels between former UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld and Beyers Naudé, what they said and stood for. A paper delivered by Barney Pityana draws parallels between Beyers and Archbishop Denis Hurley (former Catholic Archbishop from Durban). Other contributors are by Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, Christo Lombard, Hans Engdahl, Birgitta Karlström-Dorph and myself.

The book is published by the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, 2015. ISBN 978-91-7106-780-7.

My contribution to the book was previously made available on my web page, Newsletter 26.4.

Best wishes and I hope you continue to find these epistles from me interesting and useful.

Yours,

Horst