

Randfontein herald

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Randfontein Herald



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Gouefees mania!

Herald Editorial Team
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Ooster AH — The 2026 Randfontein Gouefees wrapped up after three days of music, culture and community celebration.

From its lively opening on February 27, to a rain-soaked but spirited finale on the Sunday, the festival once again confirmed its place on the West Rand social calendar.

Opening night sets the tone

The festival opened on Friday as families and visitors streamed through the gates for a weekend of entertainment. Food stalls offered flame-grilled favourites, sweet treats and traditional festival fare, while craft vendors showcased locally made goods.

Stall competitions were held, with winners announced as:

- Show Personality: Plaasmeisie se Kombuis – Roche Pepler
- Best Overall: Artists in Nature – Denys Coombes
- Chairperson's Choice: Vodacom Shop Randfontein – Shane Knoll

Imke Greyling with her father, Deon.
Photo: Clinton Botha

A balloon blower on stilts entertain the festivalgoers. Photo: Maverick Gqoba

Cindy Mienie with her furry companions, Dawie (red shirt, 4 years old) and Trompie (green shirt, 7 years old). Photo: Clinton Botha

The main stage featured performances by *Tanya V* and *Eloff*. A highlight was the high school pom-pom competition, where schools from across Randfontein competed with energy and precision. Hoërskool Jan Viljoen's J Squad claimed the title and a R10 000 cash prize.

Children's rides and games kept younger festivalgoers entertained.

Day two draws even bigger crowds

Saturday saw clear skies and increased attendance as visitors enjoyed a packed programme. Families browsed stalls and watched performances, while *Bee Bee die By* entertained younger guests.

From Capuchin monkeys to grandparents with walking sticks – and even a family of more than six – festivalgoers arrived in their hundreds on Saturday morning, ready to celebrate together.

Although the Gouefees grounds were still relatively quiet until about 11:00, the atmosphere shifted quickly when popular young Afrikaans singer Bernice West appeared in the marquee tent. Before long, the energy built and the grounds filled with laughter, music and excitement.

The Herald encountered several interesting residents, including Cindy Mienie and her two Capuchin monkeys.

According to Cindy, she is a passionate monkey lover and even has a tattoo of a beloved monkey that passed away and was close to her heart. Her two new "babies" are Dawie, four years old and neatly dressed, and Trompie, seven years old. Trompie was so excited about the Herald's presence that he even tried to grab a pen to write a sentence or two himself.

The amusement rides proved to be a major attraction.

According to Herald editor Clinton Botha, people were either brave enough to take on a wild ride or watched as loved ones screamed in fear or delight. One of the biggest highlights of the day was the return of professional wrestling to Randfontein. For many residents, the spectacle brought back memories of the old Randfontein Show, where crowds were thrilled for more than a decade by some of the best professional wrestling on the African continent.

After an almost six-year hiatus, World Wrestling Professionals (WWP), regarded as the longest-running professional wrestling company on the African continent, returned to the town as part of the festival and confirmed its commitment to being part of the event for the next three years.

Fans were treated to performances by well-known stalwarts of the South African wrestling scene, including *Ananzi*, *Mr Wrestling*, *Ryan Cage*, WWP World Heavyweight Champion *TJ Tremor* and *The LoudMouth*. They were joined by rising stars such as *Zuberi*, *Starman*, *Cyrus Stone*, *Joshua The Bull* and *Chris Kotze*, who delivered high-energy matches that drew enthusiastic reactions from the crowd.

The day also featured performances by artists including Dodo, Chris Steyn and *Droom-sindroom*, who had festivalgoers singing and dancing as residents gathered to celebrate Randfontein's culture and heritage.

Rain fails to dampen Sunday spirit

Intermittent showers on Sunday did little to deter festivalgoers, who sheltered under tents while continuing to support vendors and enjoy warm food and drinks.

Performances by Riaan Benade, *Ghapi* and *Appel* brought gospel and Afrikaans pop to the stage, ensuring an upbeat conclusion.

Organisers reflect on success

Matium van Vuuren from the Randfontein Publicity Association (RPA), also the festival organisers, expressed satisfaction with the turnout. "The turnout was excellent from the people of Randfontein and beyond. While there were a few challenges, overall the event was a success," he said. He confirmed that Gouefees will become an annual event, with additional festivals, including the Vleisfees at the end of September, set to feature on the West Rand calendar. Co-organiser Magdalena Steyn thanked sponsors and attendees for their support.

The 2026 Randfontein Gouefees provided a platform for local talent, supported small businesses and created a space for families to connect.

“The turnout was excellent from the people of Randfontein and beyond”

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Wes-Rand Nooddienste held tree af na 40 jaar

Heinrich Greyling
heinrichg@caxton.co.za

Wes-Rand — Vir meer as 40 jaar het Wes-Rand Nooddienste se streeksbevelvoerder, Gerhard Nieuwoudt (60), sy lewe gewy aan die veiligheid van die gemeenskap.

Soos die spreekwoord lui, kom alle goeie dinge tot 'n einde, en op 27 Februarie het Nieuwoudt sy brandweerbaadjie vir die laaste keer opgehang toe hy amptelik afgetree het. Hy het direk na matriek in 1984 by die brandweer begin werk en het van 1985 tot 1989 diens gedoen by die lugmag se brandweer.

“My beste vriend in matriek se pa was die brandweerhoof en ek het toe reeds as vrywilliger by die brandweer begin werk,” het hy vertel.

Na sy tyd by die lugmag het hy sy brandweerloopbaan op die Wes-Rand voortgesit toe hy as stasie-offisier by die Randfontein-brandweer aangestel is. In 1998, met die samesmelting van die nooddienste, het hy deel geword van Wes-Rand Nooddienste. Uiteindelik, in 2006, is Nieuwoudt as streeksbevelvoerder, oftewel die ‘groot baas’, aangestel.

“Deur al die jare was daar talle hoogtepunte in my loopbaan. Ek kan nie net een uitlig nie, want soos 'n mens se lewe vorder, verander jou prioriteite. Op 'n stadium het ek gespesialiseer in reddingsoperasies én selfs reddingskompetisies gewen, maar wat vir my uitstaan, is om oor die jare saam met verskillende mense te kon werk en die beste diens aan die gemeenskap te lewer,” het hy teruggedink.

Nieuwoudt glo dat hy sy deel vir die gemeenskap gedoen het en moedig ander aan: “As jy met iets begin, moet jy nie opgee nie.”

Hy sien sy tyd as streeksbevelvoerder as vervullend en meen hulle het baie bereik – onder andere deur respek en 'n kultuur van uitstekende opleiding te vestig.

“Nooddienspersoneel is net so goed soos die opleiding wat hulle ontvang en niemand word in 'n pos geplaas wat buite hul vermoë is nie,” het hy beklemtoon.

Met trots het hy opgemerk dat Krugersdorp van die beste brandweermanne en -vroue in die land het. “Ek het 'n passie vir my mense en dit is 'n hartseer tyd om te groet. Ek laat bekwame personeel en goeie vriende agter,” het hy afgesluit.



Gerhard Nieuwoudt voor die ingang van die brandweerstasie.

From potholes to progress: Key West Rand routes set for rehabilitation

West Rand — Motorists have long expressed frustration over deteriorating roads.

The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport (GDRT) says priority rehabilitation projects are underway to improve safety and mobility.

GDRT spokesperson for the MEC, Lesiba Mpya, said the projects form part of this year's light road rehabilitation programme. The initiative focuses on proactive maintenance to enhance road safety and mobility,

and to preserve infrastructure that supports economic activity and service delivery in Gauteng. MEC Kedibone Diale-Tlabela confirmed that priority routes in the West Rand were identified following detailed assessments. Key corridors and high-traffic routes will receive urgent attention.

“These interventions are designed to extend the lifespan of our roads, improve safety for all users and support economic productivity across the province. Preventative maintenance is the most cost-effective

approach, reducing long-term reconstruction costs while ensuring safer, more reliable travel for motorists, freight operators and public transport users,” she said.

West Rand priority routes include:

- D331 (Merafong)
- D92 (Carletonville)
- D374 Bridge
- N14 P28/1

Mpya said the work will include crack sealing, pothole repairs, resurfacing, asphalt and pavement layer upgrades, slope stabili-

sation, drainage construction and cleaning, guardrail repairs, road marking, replacement of road studs and the removal of illegal signage and unauthorised access points.

“We urge motorists to drive carefully in active construction zones and follow all traffic measures to protect both road users and workers. Road upgrades will continue in a phased, regionally balanced approach, guided by technical assessments and the province's strategic transport priorities,” he said.

A mother's inspiring comeback

Westonaria — In Zuurbekom, a local development centre is quietly changing lives and one of its proud success stories is 49-year-old Amelia Makwakwa from Protea Glen, Soweto.

Once an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiary caring for the sick and vulnerable in her community, Amelia is today a qualified baker at the Philani Development Centre.

For years, she dedicated herself to serving others, bathing ill community members, collecting medication on their behalf and assisting child-headed households. Building a career of her own was not something she had imagined at the time.

That changed when she began volunteering at the Philani Development Centre.

The centre, funded by the Gauteng Department of Social Development, has been empowering communities through skills development and training programmes since 2001.

Initially, Amelia assisted in the bakery by helping distribute scones to homeless people in the mornings. What began as a simple act of service soon became a passion.

“I fell in love with the smell of baking dough and cakes,” she recalled.

Recognising her enthusiasm and potential, the centre's founder, Phyllis Malope, offered her the opportunity to receive formal baking training, an opportunity that would reshape her future.

From hardship to hope

At the time, Amelia was navigating significant personal challenges. After her husband left, she was left to raise her three children alone, without financial support.

“I get emotional when I look back. I was going through a lot, but Mama Phyllis welcomed me with open arms. Through faith and determination, I pushed through,” she continued.

Through hard work and perseverance, she developed her skills and confidence. Today, she operates industrial ovens, measures ingredients with precision and helps manage customer orders. Together with her team, she produces a range of cakes supplied to businesses and individual customers. The stipend she received during her training helped her support her children during difficult times.



Amelia Makwakwa is a former caregiver and now a baker at Philani Development Centre in Zuurbekom.

She now proudly shares that her eldest son is employed, her second-born is studying at university and her youngest is in high school. “Honestly, I never thought government programmes could move you from zero to hero,” she said.

Despite travelling long distances daily and starting work early to meet delivery deadlines, Amelia remains passionate about baking.

The skill has not only provided income but also restored her dignity and self-confidence.

She also supplements her earnings by baking for neighbours, friends and family.

Phyllis says Amelia's journey reflects resilience and determination.

“She has made her children proud and shown them that anything is possible.

“Considering where she comes from, she has done magic.

“She is a true imbokodo, a strong woman,” she added.

From caring for the sick in her community to becoming a skilled pastry chef, Amelia's story stands as proof that with opportunity, support and determination, it is never too late to rebuild and rise.



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Jongmense geniet hulself by die hoofverhoog.



Ghapi het sy geesdriftige vertoning hoofsaaklik aan sy gospel-treffer gewy.



Die Merli-familie is Lorenzo, Luigi, Abigail en mamma Shani.



Appel het die Randfontein Gouefees op 'n hoë noot afgesluit.



Sibongile Nhlapo, Nompumelelo Nhlapo en Ruaan Lombard by die fees.



Tjaart, Anél en Landa Jacobs.

Feesgangers wil Gouefees jaarliks sien
Ooster-plotte — Behalwe musikale vermaak kon besoekers ook biertuine, 'n pretpark, kosstalletjies, uitstallings, 'n trou- en matriek-ekspo, asook 'n veilige Kidzone met talle aktiwiteite vir kinders, geniet – die Gouefees het dit alles gehad. “Gouefees moet beslis 'n jaarlikse geleentheid wees. Die gees by die fees is iets wat meer gereeld moet gebeur,” het Thato Mathata by die hoofverhoog-arena gesê. Met drie suksesvolle dae agter die rug, het Gouefees bewys waarom dit een van Randfontein se mees geliefde jaarlikse vieringe kan word.

Die pretrit was baie gewild en sommige Gouefeesgangers se gesigsuitdrukkings het hul opwindning of senuweeagtigheid duidelik gewys.

'n Aanhanger neem 'n foto van Steve met haar selfoon.



Annie en Thinus Nortje saam met Minadi (10).



Jayden Zingila saam met sy ma, Lerato.



Pop en rock op die verhoog terwyl 'n pom-pom groep hul danspassies wys.

 Daar's meer foto's op randfonteinherald.co.za

Gesinstyd by die hoofverhoog waar dié ouer tyd saam met haar jong kinders geniet.

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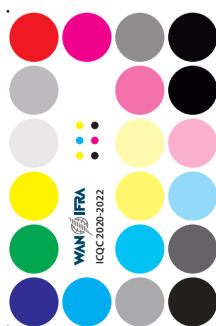
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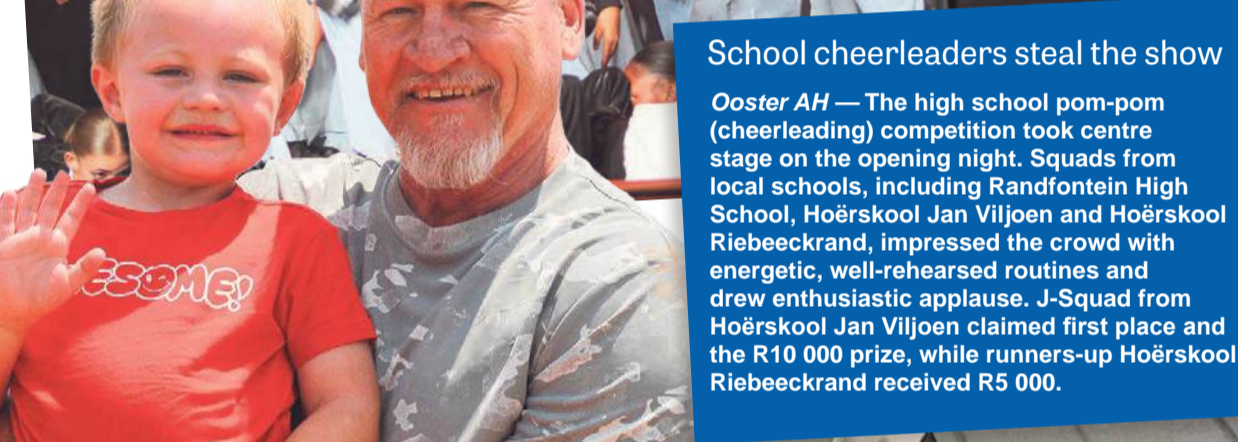
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Jan Viljoen's J-Squad cheers their way to victory.



Riebeeckrand's cheerleaders in action.



Thomas Jansen van Rensburg (4 years old) with his grandfather Apes Naudé.



Stall operators ready to serve.



Denys Coombes with his prize.

School cheerleaders steal the show

Ooster AH — The high school pom-pom (cheerleading) competition took centre stage on the opening night. Squads from local schools, including Randfontein High School, Hoërskool Jan Viljoen and Hoërskool Riebeeckrand, impressed the crowd with energetic, well-rehearsed routines and drew enthusiastic applause. J-Squad from Hoërskool Jan Viljoen claimed first place and the R10 000 prize, while runners-up Hoërskool Riebeeckrand received R5 000.

ONLINE BUZZ



The Randfontein online community gave their opinions on our top story of the week



Tighter controls and raids planned to stop zama zamas in Randfontein



Juice Gab Molekane – "I am tired of the talking."



Leina Lame Ke Tumi – "Until people accept the fact that politicians are only looking out for themselves and their families, the better! No one is coming to save you. The deployment of the SANDF will not end the reign of illegal miners. Politicians benefit massively with the zama zamas. No politician gives a **** about the people."

Lincoln DjLinx Mathysen – "I saw the army on the main road, driving in a convoy with a bunch of police officers but no indication of actual service. Seems they just put on a show and caused traffic to back up unnecessarily."



Write to the Editor email: randfonteinherald@caxton.co.za

PUZZLE FUN

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Key words in the 13 March edition.

GUIDE THE KIDS FROM THE ENTRANCE TO THE GOUFEES FERRIS WHEEL.

