



# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

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## Fire Drill

We have so far had two fire drills. No major problems emerged but a number of issues were discovered that we will need to attend to. Further drills will follow periodically. Let's hope we never have to evacuate the buildings for real but it's important that we are ready to do so if necessary.



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

I would like to welcome you to the very first edition of Windhoek International School's weekly newsletter - ***The Oryx***.

The intention is not to replace any of the existing methods of communicating with the WIS community but to add an attractive, informative and, I hope, interesting weekly bulletin that will both flag upcoming events and record what is going on in school week by week.

Moreover, in addition to news of special events, The Oryx will also include periodic reports from different branches of the school to explain and illustrate what (and how) we teach and what (and how!) students learn.

Every issue will be published on the school website and parents will be sent a link every week to remind them to catch up with what is happening. And as the weeks pass by and the issues accumulate on the website, they will become a valuable archive of school life - and perhaps a useful way to show prospective WIS parents what we have to offer.



## Teacher of the week

**Teacher: Barbara Wilson - Year 3B**

I have officially been in Namibia for one month now and I am thrilled to be here. I haven't seen much of the country yet, but I'm excited to explore more. The sky in the morning and evening is brilliant, the bird species and songs are such a lovely part of every day and WIS is a great place to be. Thank you to everyone who has made me feel so welcome.

I have been a nomad for many years and beyond the place I am currently living, call Upper Michigan and Utah home. In the summer - winter holiday here - I spend time between them. I have lived in five countries outside of the U.S., six states in the U.S. and traveled to many places around the world.

Learning and teaching have been a big part of my entire life. I have a B.S. in Marketing Management and a M.A. in School Counseling from Northern Michigan University. I began working with high school, college and graduate students through counseling roles for many years at Northern Michigan University, the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, Macalester College and the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law. I obtained my M.Ed. at the University of Minnesota and started my teaching career in the Anoka-Hennepin District outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Since that time I have taught at four other schools internationally in: Bucharest, Romania; Chennai, India; Barcelona, Spain and Monterrey, Mexico.

Why The Oryx? Well, because it is the national animal of Namibia and appears on the nation's coat of arms. Also, the oryx is marvellously adapted to life in a hot and dry climate and is renowned for its resilience and stamina - not a bad metaphor, I hope, for a school that is this year celebrating 25 years as Namibia's leading international school.

Please let me know how you find The Oryx and feel free to suggest useful and interesting features we can add.

With best wishes

*Peter MacKenzie*

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

It never ceases to amaze me to see how much the children have grown and matured during the holidays. While we've only been in school for four weeks, the Primary School has lots of interesting things happening. The children are settling in well and becoming familiar with their new class routines.

The Primary School assemblies are now held Friday afternoons. This is a time for us to come together as a community and share some of the learning that is taking place in the homeroom and specialist classes. Regular features of the assemblies include: class or specialist performance/demonstrations/sharing; recognition of birthdays, Learner Profile and Attitudes; welcoming of new students, saying farewell to leaving students, general reminders and singing a song. The Year 6 students are taking turns being the Assembly Presenters.





## WIS Student in Junior Reporter

The JUNIOR REPORTER is an admirable magazine produced by young Zambians and Namibians. The latest issue focusses on the environment and the centre spread is an impressive article on transport in Windhoek written by WIS student Ndina Simon.

Her article is based on research she did for her PYP Exhibition project earlier this year and is a great example of how the PYP encourages active engagement with real problems.

The full article can be read here: [Click Here](#)

**Congratulations, Ndina!**

This year, as part of the PE program, the KG1 - Year 1 classes will be attending swimming lessons at Aqua Swim Club at the UNAM Medical gym. Each class will have 6 weeks of lessons. Last week Year 1A students started their lessons and seem to be enjoying the experience.

The Year 5 classes took the first Field Trip of the year with a visit to the UN House. Their first unit of inquiry is the rights and responsibilities aspect of the Who We Are transdisciplinary theme. The classes have been inquiring about children's rights and the responsibilities these rights bring. The trip to the UN House provided the students with first hand information. This October the UN will be celebrating its 70th birthday.

The Year 6 students watch CNN student news each morning. A feature of the news is the Roll Call where the broadcaster mentions the names of schools that watch on a daily basis. Imagine the surprise of the students during the August 21 CNN student news to hear Windhoek International School mentioned and to see the map of Namibia indicating that WIS is in Windhoek. Here's the link to that particular broadcast; The Roll Call starts at 7:47: [Click Here](#)

Congratulations to the Student Council representatives for the first semester:

- Year 4A: Victor Somosu, Maedot Abeje**
- Year 4B: Justice Agalory, Undamuje Kavendjii**
- Year 5A: Jamal Sawadogo, Tomi Femi-Kayode**
- Year 5B: Ruth Ntema, Kendra van der Merwe**
- Year 6A: Mark Murungi, Pohamba Kapolo**

These students meet each Thursday during second break. In addition to planning activities for each term, they are also thinking of additional activities that focus on School Community, Primary School and Charity.

Thank you to all of the parents/guardians who were able to attend the Parent Back to School evening last Monday. I hope you found the information that was shared to be useful and to give you a better idea of your child's daily experiences at school. I hope you've now had a chance to sign up for your child's teacher's blog and that the blog is giving you a picture of how your child is spending his/her day at school.

The Primary School has been represented at two art exhibitions this week. Isabel Rios (Year 4) had her first art exhibition alongside her art teacher (and former WIS TA substitute) Frans Uunona. The opening was held Tuesday, September 1 at the FNCC Gallery and continues through

## Peer Counsellors

WIS is proud to announce that our 7th group of Year 10 Peer Counsellors began their training on Saturday the 29th August. Having trained Peer Counsellors on campus serves as an additional support service to our students as it is sometimes easier for a young person to talk to someone in their own age group. Besides offering emotional support to peers, this training will also provide an opportunity for personal growth and equip students with lifelong life skills. The PC's will receive training in listening, empathy, problem solving and confidential skills as well as how to recognize a serious concern that requires referral and parental involvement.



September 5. Isabel is shown here standing underneath her favourite painting.

Primary School Art teacher, Genie Albrecht and her husband Rolf are exhibiting their work at the National Art Gallery of Namibia as part of the Bank Windhoek Arts Festival / Potters' Association of Namibia 7th National Ceramics Biennale Exhibition. The opening was September 3 and the exhibition runs through September 30.



**Congratulations Isabel and Ms Genie!**

I look forward to sharing the Primary School news and information with you each week.

Kind regards,  
**Beth Smith**

## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

The start of a new year brings a lot of changes for many people. Students change classes - this alone is a big change, teachers get new classes, new students arrive, new teachers start. All this is reason for a positive outlook on the coming year. Does it not give us an opportunity to turn a fresh leaf, to start with renewed energy and determination?

For this very first edition of the Oryx, I'd like to wish all our students a successful and fruitful year. The recipe for a positive year is probably known to everybody, but it is sometimes hard to match what you know with what you do.

I wish all students and teachers of WIS that they will have a productive and inspiring 2015-2016 that will bring them one step closer to realising their potential as human beings. I wish for all of us to be compassionate and supportive of the people around us and to try to make a difference - it might seem small in the context of the situation - but it might well make a difference in the bigger picture which we do not always see.

Afternoon Activities have started and looking at the different activities, I want to commend the input and effort made to make these successful. We seem to be aiming towards having some sports teams that will prepare to participate in local competitions. We have an enthusiastic Senior Student

## Lost & Found

### Check the cupboard!

Please make sure that you check the Lost & Found cupboard regularly! At the end of each term all items not claimed will be donated to a charity. The lost and found cupboard can be found just across from the PTA Hut. Please inquire at reception if you experience any trouble.

### Up-date your d6!



Make sure to update your d6. The latest version can be found here on our website: [Click here](#)

All parents are urged to update their details on the d6 in order to receive the latest news and events!

Council ready to take on the challenges we face in everyday school life and giving their voice to help make us even better. In the spirit of this year's theme "Technology" I'd like to end with the observation that we learn from each other and that the speed in which technology develops drives us to develop as well, to keep up with changes and through that stay open-minded and receptive of the advantages these developments offer us. I'd like to hope that our students learn to use technology wisely to advance their education and wisdom, so that, in the end, they can become what they are meant to become.

Kind regards,  
**Maggie Reiff**

### The WIS Year of Technology!



It might seem like we here at WIS are not far from Judgement Day as described in the Terminator movies. We have embraced Technology, and terms like "bring-your-own-device", "Technolearning" and "Digital Citizenship" are being thrown around like food in a High-School Cafeteria (not at our new tuck-shop though, the food there is just too good to waste...)

Unlike the Terminator movies, however, where Technology quickly takes over the world and human-kind, we believe in an approach where the students are given the responsibility to use technology, not as a substitute for learning, but as an enhancement to learning in a way they understand and appreciate.

All teachers were involved in a workshop in the staff working-week at the beginning of the term, where we explored only a few of the ways in which Technology, and specifically Google in this case, can make our teaching more efficient, productive and even better for the environment. We are not far from the prophesized "paperless classrooms". Even you as the parents will already have seen the use of Technology when signing up for Afternoon Activities, the new Blogs from our Primary teachers and others.

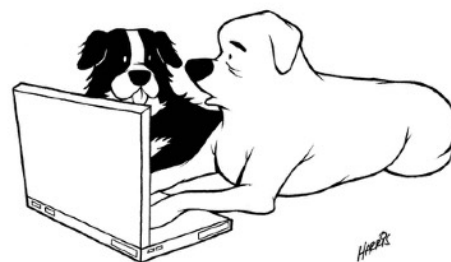


**Dates to Remember:**

**September:**

- 10 - Early Close - See d6 for details
- 15 - Board Meeting @ 18:00
- 16 - PTA Meeting @ 12:00
- 27 - **September - 2 October:**  
Orange River Field Trip
- 30 - Parent Teacher Conferences (Secondary & Primary)

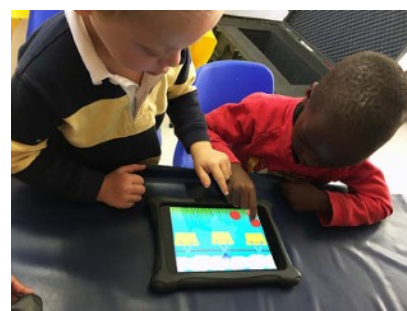
Students have also been exposed to these new aspects of teaching. “The dog ate my homework” has now been replaced with “The cat sat on my keyboard” (Luckily, due to Google’s Autosave function even that is not an issue anymore...). Copying from the board is replaced by taking pictures of it, bribing Suzy to check your essay for mistakes is replaced by clicking on “Spellcheck” and sneaking a kiss behind the toilets is now a Kiss Emoji quickly sent via Google’s chat function.



“And then I just hit delete. I haven’t actually eaten any homework in years.”

A change like this does not happen overnight. Apart from the infrastructure which has to be changed, this is not simply a case of Note- and Textbooks being replaced by iPads. It is a whole new way of thinking about the way we teach and learn. Yes, it may be scary, and yes, it will never be smooth sailing all the way. It will, however, align us with a worldwide trend seen among all of the leading schools in the world. And if we are not striving to be seen as one of these schools, how can we expect you as the parent to trust us with your child’s education?

As you know, the school has always believed that every process in a child’s education is a three-way street involving teachers, parents and the student. All of us have a role to play.



We will use every opportunity we get in this process to make sure Digitally Responsible students emerge from the school one day.

You as the parents can help us in this. It starts with small things. How much time a day is spent using technology for entertainment (tv- programs, X-box games, purposeless surfing of the web)? Do not remove the technology, use it for their benefit! In the words of President Barack Obama- “Don’t just play on your phone, program it!” And don’t be afraid to check what they are doing. Which sites are they visiting? Who do they speak to on social media? We trust our students and children, but we also put their safety first, and this means that we have to be sure they know where the boundaries are.

I hope to be giving more feedback soon on all the different ways in which we are using technology in the classroom. For now, I can tell you that the students have embraced these new methods and everyday is filled with new ideas, experiences and “Oh, wow!” moments. Watch this space!

**Mr. Riegardt Smit**