



# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### VACCINATIONS

All around the world, a debate is taking place regarding the need for, and the dangers associated with, being vaccinated against COVID.

The school's position is clear. We strongly urge all members of staff to be vaccinated as soon as possible.

We have 83 employees. As of the middle of this week, 40 have had at least one jab and 21 plan to be vaccinated imminently. Four members of staff have no plans to be vaccinated for understandable medical reasons.

A small number of staff are still undecided and one or two are firmly against the idea.

We are offering (virtual) information sessions for those with doubts, the first was last Wednesday and another next week Friday. We are well on the way to having three-quarters of our staff vaccinated and I very much hope that we can persuade others. The goal is, of course, 100%.

### WISCA

Thank you to the many parents who completed the online sign-up for WISCA. And thank you for the positive comments. The plan to have a representative from each Grade has been well-received and there appears to be a consensus that the Terms of Reference are going to provide a firm foundation.

The WISCA sign-up remains open if you would like to become involved.

The inaugural meeting will take place in August. Details will be sent nearer the time.

### GOODBYE AND THANK YOU

I began my teaching career in 1981. In a few weeks, it will be over. How does one look back on forty years?

With **gratitude**. I've been lucky. I've worked in seven schools in seven countries on four continents. I've met some wonderful people and I've been privileged to have experienced and enjoyed many different cultures.

With **humility**. Whenever I'm asked for my profession, I put down 'teacher'. But I think others have taught me far more than I was ever able to teach them.

With **pride**. When I hear from former students and they talk about their times at school and where their careers have taken them, how can I not feel pride? Seeing young people succeed, achieve, develop and grow is the very best part of the job.

With **regret**. I'm not a big believer in regret; it doesn't really achieve much. But I do regret opportunities not taken, chances missed. *Carpe diem!*

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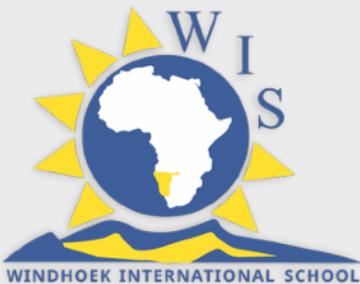
## Dates to Remember

### June 2021

- **11:** End of term 4
- **14 - 18:** Staff work week

### August 2021

- **02 - 06:** Staff work week
- **09:** Start of New Year 2021-22



With **wonder**. Did all that really happen?

In September 1981 I was an inexperienced, nervous and probably not very good teacher of history in a school in south London. Had someone told me then that I would finish my career as a headmaster (as we called them back then), I would have been doubtful. Had I been told that it would be in Africa, I would have been more than surprised. And had I been told that I'd be in a country that didn't yet exist, I'd have been confused.

Yet here I am. For six years I have been privileged to be the Educational Director of Windhoek International School. Like any school, there have been ups and downs but most of my memories will be very happy ones.

I know I am leaving the school in safe hands and I can only wish all of you every success and happiness in the future.

Goodbye and thank you.

**Peter MacKenzie**

## Soar

### **An update on the WIS vision process from Ethan Van Drunen**

Dear Community,

Many thanks to those of you who participated in last month's online conversations! The recording of the Secondary parent session is linked [here](#). This note is to share with you the timeline for the Soar-25 vision and goal-setting initiative that was introduced in the [April 30th](#) Oryx Newsletter.

#### **Step 1: Listen and learn - What is core to our mission and vision?**

This first step has already begun in earnest. The initial findings from last month's virtual conversations are presently being used to generate a community survey. Please look for an email about this survey in the last week of July.

In the first two weeks of August, teachers, staff, and student leaders will have the opportunity to look at these survey results and school-wide student achievement data in order to inform our goals for the 2021-22 school year.

#### **Step 2: Identify strengths and priorities - What will be our short-term goals and how will we organise ourselves for continuous growth?**

In August and September there will be additional conversations to identify how we will organise ourselves as a community to achieve our goals. Guiding questions include:

*What values will inform our decision-making processes? What are our strengths?*

*What are our areas for growth? What will be our mid-term priorities and short-term goals?*

*What teams, steering committees, support groups, and task forces will be best constituted to make our shared vision a reality?*

We will share a draft of these findings and the first draft of a reviewed school vision statement in the first week of September for community feedback. The final draft of the vision statement and learning goals will be shared by the end of September.

#### **3) Implement and iterate - How will we create a culture of continuous improvement?**

Like any design cycle, our school's journey involves continuous reflection and adaptation. Once we have a shared understanding of where we want to go and how we will get there, we will be able to move forward with a sense of aspiration, humility, creativity, and a grand sense of adventure.

On a personal note, as I prepare for my family's move to Namibia, I am reminded of a 1965 academic paper by the Psychologist, Bruce Tuckman. Tuckman identified that groups undergo four stages on their way to becoming a high-performing team: forming, storming, norming, and performing. He later added a fifth stage entitled "adjourning" (or ending). It seems to me that we are presently in the adjourning and forming stages. I found it useful to pause and recognise the feelings, behaviours, and tasks that are associated with each of these stages.

You may find [this article](#) to be of interest.

Please stay safe. I look forward to meeting you all in July and August!

**Ethan**

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

### Primary Principal

It is with mixed emotions and a heavy heart that I write my last Oryx article. My seven years at WIS and living in Namibia have been a wonderful and positive experience. I can't think of a better place to finish out my 40 year career in education (32 years of which have been living and working internationally). I knew from Grade 1 that I wanted to be a teacher and that never wavered. I can honestly say that it's been a wonderful and blessed career. I am looking forward to the next chapter of my life and what new experiences retirement brings.

In addition to my leaving WIS, Ms. Jan is retiring, as well. She will still be in Windhoek so I'm sure you will see her around town. Mr. Chi is moving to New York to attend a university where he's been given a fellowship. ***Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same.*** - (Flavia Weedn)

Many parents ask how they can help their children at home. The best thing you can do to support your child's learning during the upcoming winter (summer) holiday is to encourage reading, whether it be reading to your child, having your child read to you or your child reads independently.

**Research on  
Summer Reading**

Children who **DO NOT READ** in the summer can **lose two to three months** of reading skills.

Kids who **DO READ** tend to **gain a month** of reading proficiency.

Here are a few reminders:

- The final virtual [Primary Parent Information session](#) will be Wednesday, 16 June at 17:30. The focus of this meeting is to explain the progress report.
- The second semester progress reports will be sent via email during the week of 21st June.
- Class Lists for the 2021-2022 school year will be posted on Friday, 6 August.



Thank you to all of you for your support this academic year. For those of you who are leaving WIS, best wishes to you and your children with the transition, be it to a new school, new country, or returning to your home country. Keep safe and healthy during the holidays. To all who are returning to WIS for the new academic year I know that Ms. Marcelle van Leenen is looking forward to welcoming you back to school on Monday, 9 August. I wish you all the very best. I will enjoy reading and hearing about all the great things that will be happening at WIS in the future.



**With gratitude,  
Beth Smith**

# Grade 1 Unit of Inquiry

Where we are in place and time: Central Idea: Building bridges helps to connect people and places

Can you build a bridge with one piece of paper and two blocks? Students quickly discovered that they could make the bridges stronger by folding the paper. Can you build a bridge to help a gnome to get from his village to the town?



The bridge had to be strong enough to hold a gnome and high enough for an origami boat to sail under. Students also recorded the height, width and length of their bridges. Click [here](#) to hear what Felix had to say about his gnome bridge.



Some of the comments:-

“The bridge needs ramps but they shouldn’t be too steep.”

“I think we need to put some kind of barrier so that Sphero Mini doesn’t go over the side.”

“Maybe we have to make him go faster so that he has enough speed to get over the bridge?” Of course there were loud cheers whenever anyone managed to steer Sphero Mini over the bridge.

Students have been working on individual projects about bridges from around the world. Click [here](#) to see what Cole found out about the Chicago Movable Bridges.



Malek has been busy completing the bridge building challenges on the Seesaw App and sharing them during online learning.

Bridge Spotting Challenge. Can you find all these bridges in Windhoek?

## Grade 5 PYP Exhibition



Dear WIS Community,

Grade 5 IB PYP Exhibition: The students have been exploring this inquiry process over the past ten weeks. We are very proud of them. They displayed resilience and perseverance throughout this process. This was an interesting inquiry and investigation into: "How the World Works."

The idea of the PYP Exhibition is that it draws on all the things students have learned, the attitudes, the skills, the knowledge and concepts and actions students have developed and built over their entire primary schooling experience.

Students explored concepts like scientific innovations and advances in technology and natural world or human society problems. Students made connections with these real life, complex issues and came up with solutions. They became aware that they can make a difference and be part of bettering our world.

An important part of the exhibition has been the "collaborative effort". We are so impressed to witness how our students have come together as a team and supported each other. In order for the PYP Exhibition to be successful, it needed to be facilitated and supported by parents, students, and mentors.

- Thanks for the Arts team - who supported the creative synthesis - Ms. Laura, Ms. Junelle, Ms. Michelle and Mr. Chi.
- Thanks also to the voluntary mentors who work within our school community: Mr. Tom, Mr. Rick, Ms. Sinead, Ms. Kaye, Ms. Debi, Ms. Debbie, Ms. Jan, Ms. Elsie, Ms. Beata, Ms. Sharon, Ms. Liz, Mr. Johan, and Ms. Maggie for taking time to support our various exhibition groups.
- To the Grade 5 team: Ms. Jane, Ms. Annemarie, Mr. G., Ms. Richenda and Mr. D - thank you for all your efforts, the time you have taken to support and facilitate all the people that are standing here tonight. I know your students love and respect you for your energy, care and patience.
- Thank you to all the parents for your support and care.

This is an opportunity for you, as the community, to see a snapshot of the process the Grade 5s have gone through during this exhibition journey.

Thank you for joining the Grade 5 IB PYP Exhibition website: <https://sites.google.com/wis.edu.na/pypexhibition2021/welcome>



## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

### **We made it through 2020-2021**

We are grateful to have been able to complete the academic year 2020-2021. This was certainly one of the most challenging and difficult years for all involved and we are thankful of our teachers' and students' efforts and perseverance through the year.

We have managed to complete our IBDP and IGCSE examinations this year and our other classes were able to complete their current units. We hope to be able to return fully in August.

This is an opportunity to say goodbye in the hope that those who leave us, keep us in their hearts and that those who return, return safely on the 9th of August. If you leave to another school, country or destination overall, we wish you all the very best. We would like to say goodbye in particular to those staff members who are leaving us.



the man from sinking into what happened just now. He looked up, fierce murderousness chilled Peter, forcing him to drop his bag, noticing that the man was coming in his direction. Peter turned around to run, because even thinking of the sharpness of the machete would make him shudder. Drops of sweat came down from his cheeks and fear overfilled his eyes. Peter sped forward as quickly as he could, which was quite difficult due to a previous **skydiving injury**, passing lines of small buildings, and finally hid behind a bush, hoping to elude the man behind him. His face was pale and strained, he inhaled and exhaled continuously for the sake of catching his breath. Soon he heard a few heavy footsteps.

"I know you are here, and I warn you, if you dare to tell anyone, you are gonna pay for it." The murderer said defiantly, the voice was soon to cease.

As far as Peter remembered, he sat behind the bush for almost two hours since he knew the man might be waiting for him somewhere in the unknown darkness. Peter's leg was numb after a few tries of getting up. When he made his way home, it was already 9 o'clock, his wife first brought a towel for him to clean the sweat and dirt. She asked him what happened, but he refused to tell. Peter tried to clear his mind with a few handfuls of water pressed on his face and a huge gulp of **red wine**, he looked up in the mirror and examined himself with pensive eyes. What is the right thing to do? What should he do? Peter was known as an **ethical teacher** for many years, who treated each and every one of his students fairly, an honest person who made justice weigh heavy in his head, but it was still necessary for him to draw a distinction between decisions.

The next morning, Peter made a simple breakfast for both his wife and him. He turned on the TV. Rather, two familiar people appeared on the television, the man from yesterday and the image of a poor girl laying on the ground, lifeless. The screen changed, a mother gently stroked her daughter's cold body, her pain filled tears hitting the ground like an unstoppable waterfall, as if this was her last gift to her daughter. From this moment, Peter was destined to be the eyewitness in the court.

Two days later, the suspect was arrested due a hair that does not belong to the dead in the alley. Only until then, Peter knew that the murderer's name was Travis.

#### **April, 2021**

"All rise."

Everyone in the courtroom stood up, listened to the judge and raised their right hand. The judge went on, he spoke clearly, but to Peter, what the judge said was quite vague, as he grew increasingly nervous because Travis was right behind him sitting next to the prison officer. Travis stared at Peter with a pair of eyes that belonged to a wolf, which distracted Peter by telling everyone about the time he worked in **Japan**, until the judge asked: "Does the prosecution wish to call any witnesses?"

"Yes your honor, the prosecution wishes to call Mr. Peter MacKenzie to the stand."

"I call Mr. Peter to the stand and ask the Bailiff to place him under oath." Peter dragged himself uneasily towards the Bailiff.

"Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

Peter did what the Bailiff required him to do and began.

"On Saturday, 27th of March, it was around 6 o'clock, I..."

Time seemed to fly in this courtroom, two hours had passed, and Travis expectedly maintained his innocence this whole time, but he couldn't do that anymore after the court accumulated the evidence and the eyewitness, and since Travis had no attorney, the trial ended early. Travis was charged for second-degree murder, and sentenced life in prison with no chance to parole.

The sun was still high by the time Peter stepped out of the court. He started his car, and as the sound of the engine revving up grew louder, it occurred to him that in this era, we do not lack perfect people, but the sincerity, justice, fearlessness and sympathy given from the heart. He motioned his **Fortuner** further, his face lined by the golden sunshine, he watched as the blue varnished skyline extended in his vision, while the corners of his mouth formed a nice arc, knowing that he can return to the next phase of his life.

## Grade 8 poem

**There is a kind man called Mr. MacKenzie**

Full of joy, full of life, full of affection  
Always did everything with perfection

An amazing director  
And a vast CD collector

A great cook,  
And the author of a book

He's been to far off places  
And has seen some interesting faces

Fairness, Honesty and Justice  
If you don't watch out, Mr. MacKenzie can surely bust us!

Watching birds is his hobby  
Sitting with a glass of wine in a fancy lobby

Photography, that's his relaxation  
Dreaming of his retirement aspirations...

The WIS kids bid you farewell  
We will miss the stories you so loved to tell!

**Car Security Stickers**  
**Please collect your 2021 - 2022**  
**windscreen sticker at the Office!**



## KH-X-Trail event 5th June

Seven WIS kids took part in the KH-X-Trail event on 5th June at Farm Godeis. It was a challenging 7km trail up mountains and over boulders and was certainly no walk in the park! The scenery was stunning. Running through river beds, spotting tadpoles and frogs in pools of water, running across the top of the dam and enjoying spectacular vistas when climbing over the top of the mountains. Some parents and teachers took part too. Well done to the following students for completing such a challenging trail:

- Sasha Marais-Martin (Grade 3)
- Alexander Collair (Grade 3)
- Phillip, Johanna & Benjamin Oldenberg (Grades 1, 3 and 6)
- Emilian & Kamillus Jagla (Grades 5 and 7)

**Congratulations** on such an accomplishment! Here are some photos of the event:



## Protecting ourselves and our community

On 18th June, our last school day for staff, Dr. Steven Hong will address all WIS staff via a zoom meeting, to further answer questions about getting vaccinated and to help people make informed decisions. Dr. Hong is the Clinical Services Branch Chief at the CDC Namibia. He is an expert in the COVID response and vaccinations, and works closely with the Ministry of Health.

I shared the information below with all WIS staff this week, and followed it up with a Q and A session a day later. The links below might provide you with useful information about the COVID vaccines in general, and getting vaccinated in particular. In other words it might help you make a decision.

The sources are reputable: Johns Hopkins Medicine, the Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy, and Reuters. Within the media space, Reuters is neutral and reputable.

Two standout quotes to get you going:

***“People who have not really seen a vaccine trial or don’t understand how clinical trials work - they’re always going to have concerns that it’s just been too fast.”***

***“It’s not simply that a company can make up their own information,” said Chagla. “They hold a trial. There’s a placebo group. There are independent bodies that monitor the data. There are independent bodies that monitor the safety. There are independent bodies that monitor the ethics of these clinical trials.”***

Dr. Chagla is associate professor and an infectious disease physician in the Department of Medicine at McMaster University..

***“There’s often this perception that you see in the anti-vax community that there’s somehow a collaboration, or a conspiracy, with the pharmaceutical industry, with government, and with regulatory bodies, in order to fast-track a vaccine without good evidence,” said Caulfield. “That’s not the way it works ... these developers are building on decades of research.”***

Dr. Caulfield is Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Society

- Link 1: Myth v Fact

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines-myth-versus-fact>

- Link 2: Lots of good points especially on the ‘rushed’ argument.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7511664/fact-or-fiction-covid-19-vaccine/>

- Link 3: More info on the trials and blood clots

<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-vaccine-clot-idUSL1N2MF10E>

- And finally Link 4 will help understand how the vaccine works. This link from CDC.

[https://www.facebook.com/CDC/videos/how-viral-vector-vaccines-work/180264717358150/?\\_so=\\_permalink&\\_rv=\\_related\\_videos](https://www.facebook.com/CDC/videos/how-viral-vector-vaccines-work/180264717358150/?_so=_permalink&_rv=_related_videos)

Sharon Gorelick, Nurse & Counsellor



## It is time to say goodbye!

***"The two hardest things to say in life are hello for the first time and goodbye for the last."* Moira Rogers**

The one sad thing about being part of the WIS community is when June arrives. This is the time when some of us need to move on to greener pastures or go back home or even retire. This year is no different, as we need to say goodbye to multiple staff members.

While it pains us to bid you farewell as you start a new phase in your life, we sincerely wish you continued success in all your future endeavours.

May you all be happy! The WIS Staff





# SEIZE THE CLAY IN A



**Feel like playing with clay during the holidays?**



**For more information contact Genie Albrecht @**

**[geniealbrecht998@gmail.com](mailto:geniealbrecht998@gmail.com)**





# Clear THE Shelter

SPCA Windhoek is participating in a national SPCA adoption drive to find homes for the many deserving animals in our care across the country!

## Saturday, 26 June

50% off adoption\* fees for one day only! The one time only fees are:

**Dog adoption fee: N\$ 650**

**Cat adoption fee: N\$ 550**

Special open hours: 09h00 - 13h00 and 15h00 - 17h00

Location: SPCA Windhoek shelter

*\*Normal adoption procedures apply.*

For more information contact us: SPCA Windhoek | 145 Robert Mugabe Avenue, Windhoek  
Tel: +264 61-238 654 | Fax: 061-225 715 | Cell: 081-124 4520 Emergency (After Hours Only)  
Email: [info@spcawindhoek.org.na](mailto:info@spcawindhoek.org.na)