

# THE SHARK

The American International School of Rotterdam

## Director's Message

During such a busy time of the year time flies by quite quickly and last week's Thanksgiving celebration and dinner seem like a long time ago. Regardless of the distance of time, I would like to thank the members of the PTSA and Tjeerd for once again making the Thanksgiving dinner such a successful event. We would all still probably be standing in line if it were not for the efficiency of the PTSA and our kitchen staff.

I would also like to thank the PTSA Outreach Committee for helping us all focus on others at this time of year. With leadership from the PTSA, AISR has collected and delivered 230 pairs of socks, 97 pairs of gloves and 81 hats to the Havenzicht. This past week middle and high school students joined the PTSA Outreach members to make and serve soup at the Havenzicht as well, as part of our on-going work with that organization. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's Havenzicht outreach efforts.

Another project that AISR has become engaged in is "Hoops of Hope." The students in our Global Issues Network and the Rotterdam Challengers, a local professional basketball team, sponsor this event. Hoops of Hope is a drive to raise money and awareness for children orphaned by AIDS. Hoops of Hope was started, just a few years ago, by a 12 year old boy from the state of Arizona in the United States and the program has grown considerably since then.

By now your children should have brought home a t-shirt and some printed information about the Hoops of Hope activity on the 19th of January 2008. We hope that you and your family will consider joining us on the 19th January in support of this worthwhile program.

Next Friday, 7 December, is the first day of semester exams for high school students. As a reminder, students must be ready to go for the morning exams by 8:45 AM each morning and for the afternoon exam they must be ready by 12:45 PM. There are no high school classes during the days of exams, any student in school and not taking an exam must be either in the library or the cafeteria. As this semester draws to a close, we wish all of the high school students the best on their exams.

With the end of the semester and calendar year, we know that a number of you will be leaving Rotterdam and AISR before school opens again in January. If you are one of the families leaving us please be sure to contact the office right away so we can have all of the school records and other materials ready for you as you plan your move.

Brian Atkins, Director

## Elementary Principal's Message

There are only a few short days to the shortest day of the year and even less time until the end of the semester and our winter break. In the meantime there is much to be done.

Next Wednesday, December 5, AISR will celebrate the tradition of the Dutch Sinterklaas. To help people understand what Sinterklaas is actually about, Mr. Temminck and Ms. Benard work very hard to prepare our students for his arrival, teaching them the history of the holiday and it's cultural importance to our host country. Hopefully, he will be able to find time in his busy schedule to visit with us. I have included a short explanation of the meaning of this very special day:

#### THE TRADITION OF SINTERKLAAS

You must have noticed that the Dutch still have a few traditions which are very much alive. Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas) is one of these traditions. Even in the Dutch immigrant societies in Australia and Canada, Sinterklaas has remained a tradition when other Dutch habits have disappeared.

Why is it that Sinterklaas is as dear to the Dutch as Saint Patrick is to the Irish and Santa Lucia is to the Swedish? Sinterklaas has been celebrated since the Middle Ages as a religious festival. A tradition that has survived for so long however, has been subjected to some changes throughout the ages, keeping up with new developments within society. Today the stores have their golden weeks to make sure that Sinterklaas is not forgotten.

Sinterklaas arrives by boat into The Netherlands – this could be up to three weeks before his actual “Saint's Day” on December 6th. His arrival is a huge event and is covered by national television (Het Sinterklaas Journaal).

From the moment he arrives in Holland until his celebration on December 5, the children place their shoes in front of the door, or beside the fireplace. During the night Sinterklaas visits all the houses by traveling over the roofs on his white and gray horse, called a “schimmel” in Dutch. His little helpers, called “Zwarte Pieten” enter the houses through the chimney to put presents in the children's shoes. This rather strange way of entering a house can account for their “sooty” faces! Sometimes the children put straw, carrots and water near their shoes for the horse.

On the eve of his feast day, Sinterklaas goes around to each house. After knocking on the door, he is invited to come in. This is the time that all Dutch children receive their Sinterklaas presents. Early in the morning of December 6, Sinterklaas returns quietly to Spain.

The Dutch, young and old, love their Sinterklaas! In the same way that Santa Claus has survived the test of time, it is so refreshing to see such a simple and enjoyable tradition continue to be a very important part of contemporary Dutch culture.

I wish you all a wonderful Sinterklaas celebration in your adopted homes here in The Netherlands.

Anne Marie Blitz, Elementary Principal

#### **AISR's Board of Trustees**

##### The Finance Committee



The Finance Committee of the AISR Board is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the financial stability and security of the School. The committee is made up of 4 full board members and works in close liaison with the School Director and Business Manager.

At the regular meetings – generally about 7 per annum – the accounting statements of the school are reviewed. Items such as cash flows, expenditure levels and investments are highlighted and discussed. The ongoing goal is to ensure that the school is operating in a fully solvent environment with a healthy financial forecast well into the future.

It is really on forward planning where the team spends most of its time. For example, planned levels of school fees and staff remuneration are discussed and

recommended. Also, each year a comprehensive operating budget is prepared for the school by the Director and Business Manager and again this is reviewed by the Finance Committee prior to a subsequent recommendation for adoption being made to the full Board. It is through this mechanism that the School always has a future financial plan in its hands for at least 12 months into the future.

Financial and legal compliance is an important topic for all organizations these days and AISR is no exception. This leads the committee into technical appraisal of pension schemes, taxation matters, insurance policies, significant contracts and other items of this nature. Here the objective is to make sure that the School is not exposed to financial or legal risk under any of the headings mentioned.

Finally, each year the School's financial operations (and books) are subject to a rigorous review by external auditors KPMG. It is a Finance Committee responsibility to review the audit findings as well as the statutory annual financial report which is produced.

The Committee is made up as follows:

Wouter Smith – Committee Chairman and AISR Board Treasurer

Alan Steele-Nicholson – AISR Board Chairman

Andrew Jarvis – AISR Board Vice-Chairman

Andrew George-Kelso – AISR Board Secretary

Brian Atkins – AISR Director

Maria Josey – AISR Business Manager

We hope this information is helpful and informative.

Andrew George-Kelso, Finance Committee

### **Hoops of Hope – Shoot-a-thon**

January 19th, 2008 @ 12:00

AISR Gym

Hosted by: The Global Issues Network Club (GINC), the Rotterdam Challengers and the American International School of Rotterdam.

What is a shoot-a-thon: Participants will be placed into age appropriate groups. Together these groups will then shoot enough baskets to represent the number of children who are orphaned by HIV/AIDS daily.

Please remember to submit your participation form to the office by January 11, 2008.

If you wish to shoot hoops the cost is €5 or if you would prefer to lend your support to the participants your entrance is FREE.

T-SHIRT?

Are you interested in buying a Hoops of Hope T-shirt? There are additional t-shirts available in size XL ONLY at a cost of €5 each and proceeds will be donated to Hoops of Hope/World Vision. T-shirts can be bought from Stacy Dinse in the Finance Office (while supplies last).

See you January 19th, 2008!

Stacy Dinse, Global Issues Network

### **PTSA NEWS**

The PTSA Outreach Committee would like to extend our very sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to our Thanksgiving Drive in support of the Havenzicht Shelter. In total, 230 pairs of socks, 97 pairs of gloves, and 81 hats were collected and delivered to the shelter this past Wednesday. That same evening, several high school students and parent volunteers served homemade soup to the residents of Havenzicht. The soup was prepared and delivered earlier in the day by a group of 7th grade students, along with members of the PTSA committee. To all who played a role in this meaningful and rewarding activity, a very warm "thank you"!

On Thursday, 6 December, our elementary students will once again participate in our Outdoor Tree Lighting

Ceremony, beginning at 2:30 pm in the cafeteria. Students will have an opportunity to donate their own hand-made holiday decorations, which will then be delivered to the Havenzicht shelter and used to brighten up their facility in time for the holiday season. Many thanks to Mr. David Blackburn for overseeing the production of these very special ornaments! Parents are welcome to attend this short program.

In keeping with tradition, the PTSA will once again sponsor a Bake Sale on the evening of Thursday, 13 December during the fabulous Seasonal Performance. Donations of baked goods are graciously requested. In addition that evening, the PTSA will be selling reusable cloth shopping bags with the AISR logo proudly displayed, the perfect solution for this busy shopping season. We hope to see you there for what promises to be a lovely occasion.

Finally, in preparation for the upcoming Annual Dinner Dance/Silent Auction on 1 March, 2008, teachers have chosen the themes for this year's class baskets, which will be auctioned off that evening. Each class will collect items according to its theme, so please take a moment to check the list and plan accordingly.

- PreK 1: International Child's Play Basket
- PreK 2: Parents' Night In Basket
- Kindergarten: Children's Arts and Crafts Basket
- Grade 1: Travel Games Basket
- Grade 2: Wine and Cheese Basket
- Grade 3: Bookcase with Books
- Grade 4: Family Night Basket
- Grade 5: International Food Basket
- Grade 6: Spa Basket
- Grade 7: World Cultures Basket
- Grade 8: Coffee Basket
- Grade 9: French Basket
- Grade 10: Chocolate Basket

Grade 11: American Basket

Grade 12: Gourmet Basket

As always, thank you for your continued support of our PTSA!

#### **Private Tuition**

Dutch for all levels by qualified and experienced teacher of International Baccalaureate.

**Phone: 06 206 77310**

**Email: [m.akerboom@aisr.nl](mailto:m.akerboom@aisr.nl)**

**Marga Akerboom**

#### **Are you interested in Piano lessons?**

A new year, a new hobby

Piano lessons for all levels and ages, adults and children with an experienced teacher.

Please contact: Ceylan on 0625392857

#### **For Sale**



Avenue Porto city style ladies bike – with full suspension, 7 gears, and 6 months warranty still valid. Cost €275.00. Contact Simon on 06-23851421.

#### **Interested in Cricket?**

From mid-January the indoor winter cricket training begins again at VOC cricket club in Hillegersberg. Boys and girls from about 6 years old are welcome to join in. For the 6 - 8 yr olds the winter training is likely to be on a Friday afternoon.

For more information contact Inge Moorman  
moorwild@luna.nl or Renee Alberts  
renee.alberts@loyensloeff.com.

#### The British Club of The Hague

#### Christmas Fair

Saturday 1 December 2007

10.00 am – 3.00 pm

St John and St Philip's Church

Ary van der Spuyweg 1,

Den Haag

ENTRY: 1 Euro

Homemade Christmas puddings, cakes, cards, jewellery,  
books, refreshments plus lots more In support of

The British Club of The Hague and the Church of St  
John and St Philip.

### Important Upcoming Events

November 30	HS Bonn @ home
December 1	SAT Exams
December 1	JV Boys @ home vs ISSE/ISH/BIS
December 1	HS 4-school tournament
December 6	MS @ ISA
December 6	Tree Lighting Ceremony
December 7-12	HS Final Exams
December 15-January 7	Winter Break

Please come and  
support the High  
School Basketball  
Teams for the  
Mini-Basketball  
Tournament this  
Friday November  
30 and Saturday  
December 1.  
See our website  
for details.  
**GO SHARKS!**

