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WINDHOEK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year ...

This is the first issue of The Oryx in 2021 so, just a couple of weeks late, allow me to wish everyone a successful and enjoyable year. There is reason to believe that it will be a better one than last.

... and Happy Birthday!

Tomorrow – 16th January – is the 30th anniversary of the first day of Windhoek International School. The official opening ceremony took place a little later but it was on the 16th that learners and teachers came together for the first time.

Reopening

And ten days after celebrating the opening of the school, we will be reopening again. As was announced on Wednesday and further to the message you should have received yesterday, the school will reopen for all Grades on **Tuesday 26th January**.

There has been some confusion over whether the Early Years Grades may return on the 26th (or have to wait until 1st February) but it is our understanding that they may.

And whereas Grade 12 learners in Namibian schools are awaiting results and will not return to school until 16th February, our Grade 12 students are in the final weeks of studying for their IB Diploma exams and need to be in school. We are confirming with the Ministry of Education that this will be acceptable.

The Annual General Meeting

The 2021 AGM will take place on **Wednesday 27th January**. Because of the current situation, it will be a virtual meeting. A link will be sent nearer the time. It will start at 6pm.

Parents who are interested in standing for election to the Board of Directors may find all the necessary documents on D6. Nominations and supporting documents must be received by **Sunday 17th January**. Please submit them to nominations@wis.edu.na

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

I recently read this article, [An Optimist's View Going into 2021](#), by author and inspirational speaker Simon Sinek. It's an interesting perspective about optimism and some of the lessons learned from 2020. Sinek describes optimism as, "It is not seeing the glass as half full and ignoring the half of the glass that is empty. It is the ability to see the emptiness of half the glass while choosing to focus the fullness of the other half

of the glass.” He goes on to say that “some of the silver linings and lessons that came out of 2020 will help us make 2021 a remarkable and inspiring year.”

We have begun the second semester with remote learning ~ not what we wanted or had hoped, however seeing the glass half-full ... We had the experience of remote learning from March to June and then again August to October which enabled us to begin the new semester on time and without missing a beat. With each round of remote learning we've made revisions and improved the process. Teachers have commented to me how well the students were ready and prepared on Monday and they have more or less remembered what to do for getting logged onto and participating in their online lessons. There may have been a few hiccups along the way this week but we've problem-solved and sorted out the glitches. It won't be long until we are back in school for face to face learning.

Sinek encourages having an infinite (open) mindset as opposed to a finite (closed) mindset. He sees 2020 as having more “behind” than “ahead” days (rather than bad and good days) than desired and we should be looking to 2021 with optimism and having more “ahead” days. At WIS we teach and encourage our students to have a positive growth mindset which is somewhat similar but related to their personal abilities. Both infinite and positive growth mindsets are about optimism.

While we can't necessarily plan for this semester the way we have in the past, having dates of events set in stone, we can adapt, alter, refine and find new ways of doing things. Whether we are in school for a full day of face to face learning, a hybrid schedule, or full remote learning, we will rise to the challenge and most likely learn some new ways of teaching and learning along the way. I look forward to 2021 with optimism and I hope you are too. I wish you all a happy and positive 2021.

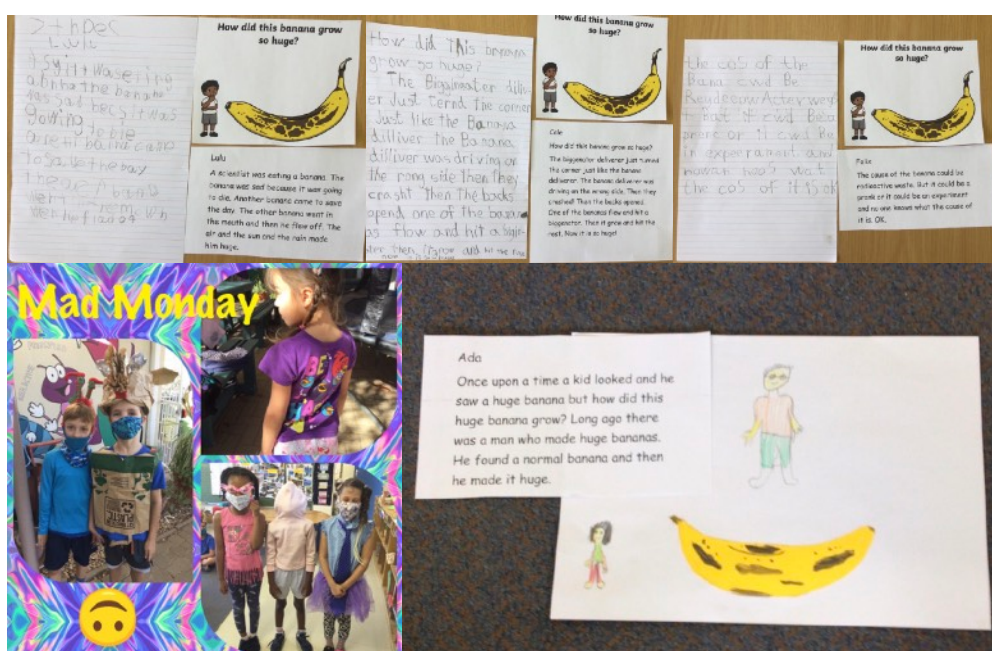
Watch this week's [Remote Learning Assembly - 15 January 2021](#).

**Regards,
Beth Smith**

Grade 1J Chronicles

During Spirit Week we had Mad Monday.

As well as dressing up in a mad way, we also had a look at a mad picture of a huge banana and wrote stories about it!



At the end of semester 1, Mr. D introduced us to 'The Hour of Code'. What a fantastic opportunity! Here's what 1J had to say about the experience.



So, 1J, what did you think about that?

You have to think about how it goes and never give up. (Ada)

It was fun. (Calliope)

It was nice but kind of complicated. (Malek)

I had to try my best. (Glorious)

I liked it but once I got to level 11, I really liked it. (Felix)

It got harder and harder and harder! (Soliyana)

It was fun for me. (Wihan)

It was fun but also tricky. (Philipp)

Level 1 was not hard. (Wilandre)

It was easy and then hard. (Kari)

Thank you to Mr D for showing us coding. (Ada)

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

To a new start - with an open mind, hope and confidence

School this week has started a little different than we had hoped it would. We had planned to be back fully - "normal" - in January. This is not possible.

However, starting remotely, is not something new, is not something totally unexpected and should not be something we dread. We have had a good opportunity to learn to manage with remote learning in the past year and can only benefit from that this time.

We have gone off to a good start this week. Almost all our students are engaged and responsible in their online classes and our teachers - as always - have made every effort to get us all off to a good start. We appreciate this and are thankful for the opportunities and being able to continue teaching and learning despite sometimes unpredictable and uncertain circumstances.

I am therefore confident that we can approach 2021 with confidence and an open mind. We will successfully navigate our ship through the still troubled waters and we can continue to hope that our community stays safe and healthy or that members of our community who are not well, recover well.

To all our new families - we welcome you to WIS. May your experience with us be a beautiful and memorable one. WIS is happy to welcome eleven new students in the Secondary School - from Grade 6 - 10. Make the most of this great opportunity for a wonderful education.

Parent Information Session - Thursday, 14 January

We had a very positive information session with more than 30 participants. Thank you all for joining. If you could not attend, here is the recording from the meeting (please ignore the last 10 minutes), the chat transcript and the slido questions with answers to the questions where appropriate:

- [Meet recording](#)
- [Transcript and slido questions and replies](#)

I wish us all a positive year.

Regards,
Maggie Reiff



Sandman Triathlon



The impact of the last 9 months has had a hugely detrimental impact on team sports. Many of our students diligently train every week for the chance to play competitive sport with one of the numerous sporting clubs in the city.

Although all sports events have, to some extent, been affected, there has been a significant growth in individual sports. Participating in triathlon events is a great way to stay fit and healthy; Namibia has a range of excellent triathlon events throughout the year. Triathlon involves individuals or teams completing a course over specific distance in three

events - swimming, cycling, and running.

Congratulations to all those who took part in the OTB Sandman event held in Swakopmund on the 6th December 2020.

"It was great fun, a wonderful challenge, and quite inspiring as there were lots of people from WIS at the event. The greatest challenge for most team members was the swim in the cold ocean, but we all made it!"

"Participating in a triathlon is great as you can select your preferred distance and you can even participate as a team."

Swim/Ride/Run

MINI (150m/7km/3km)

SPRINT (40m/20km/4km)

STANDARD (1km/40km/10km)

For more information check out the links below:

Contact wissports@wid.edu.na or tjackson-read@wis.edu.na for more information.

<https://ntf.go.na/>

<https://events.otbsport.com/>



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Congratulations Alex Smith

Congratulations to **Alex Smith** in Grade 5A who has been practicing Karate for only 6 months and has already completed his yellow belt.

Well done Alex, keep it up.

Please email your pictures of sports endeavours to us for inclusion in the weekly edition of the ORYX: tjackson-read@wis.edu.na

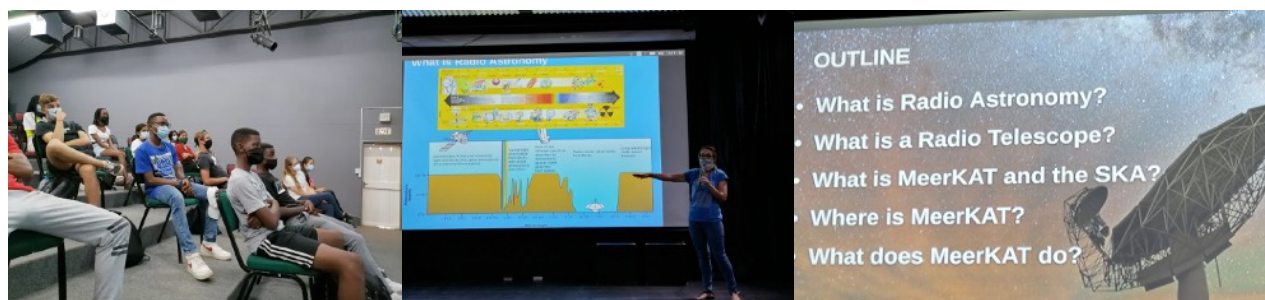


Adventures in Radio Astronomy

Vereese Van Tonder works for the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO - <https://www.sarao.ac.za/>). She is a Software Engineer within the Electronics department with responsibilities including development of software requirements, design, implementation, testing, and verification of software required by the MeerKAT telescope. She is currently working on a project related to the time and frequency reference system of the telescope. Prior to SARAO she worked as an Electronic Engineer at the Green Bank Observatory.



SARAO has a Science engagement and Public relations department where they run outreach activities for students. The main focus of the outreach work is to teach children about Radio Astronomy, to motivate them to pursue STEM careers, and to inform them of the opportunities that the MeerKAT telescope brings.



Vereese, who lives in South Africa, is currently in Namibia visiting relatives so we grabbed the opportunity for her to present to our Grade 10 students. On 7th December she came and gave an inspiring talk about the work she does. Her passion for Radio Astronomy was evident. She explained the reason for the MeerKAT telescope and how it helps scientists to see other galaxies far away. She even told us that Namibia is now a signed partner country for the SKA (Square Kilometre Array) and are looking at the Gemsberg area as the location for a telescope. Coincidentally I happened to run into one of our alumni students this week, Lucy Hopwood, who told me she is studying AstroPhysics in the USA. A former classmate of hers, Thyra Eysselinck, is also studying

AstroPhysics in the USA. I wonder if these two remarkable young ladies might one day be working on the telescope that Namibia hosts - what an exciting prospect!

Lian Cohen - Grade 10LC homeroom teacher

Desert Dash 2020

The Desert Dash 2020 is, for many cyclists, the premier event on the Namibian sports calendar. Athletes periodise their training programme 12 months in advance in an attempt to complete the 373km race from Windhoek to Swakopmund.

The event attracts domestic riders and professionals from around the world as the participants attempt to negotiate their way across the world's oldest desert.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have been able to participate in the race and have now successfully completed the route in the allocated 24 hours five times in the last five years.

*According to the **Desert Dash** organisers this officially makes me a 'hardegat'.*

Please contact tjackson-read@wis.edu.na for all enquiries related to cycling.

Tom Jackson-Read

