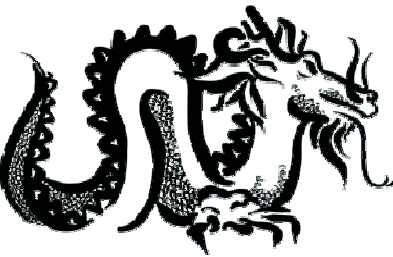


# Dragon Tales



Volume 9 Issue 38

Monday, June 15, 2009

FREE

## WHAT'S ON?

### SECONDARY AWARDS

Tuesday June 16 at 8:15am

### FAREWELL BACI

Wednesday 17 June at 1:15pm

### SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Thu 18 June to Wed 12 August

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### VIS Board Election

Election of VIS Board Directors takes place at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year in September. The Board has 8 voting members. Board members are elected for 2-year terms and there are no term limitations for re-election. The VIS Director is an ex-officio member of the Board and the US Ambassador appoints an ex-officio member to the Board. Board responsibilities (from the VIS By-Laws):

- ♦ Selection and employment of a Director of School
- ♦ Approval of annual capital and financial budgets
- ♦ Ensure VIS Staff opinion and status is subject of discussion
- ♦ Submit detailed reports - AGM
- ♦ Purchase/lease property and maintain existing property
- ♦ Set ceilings for financial actions of Director and Business Manager
- ♦ Explore practical sources of alternative income
- ♦ Ensure proper accounting including a yearly audit by a renowned firm
- ♦ Evaluation of the Director on an annual basis
- ♦ Monitor the educational program of the School
- ♦ Ensure compliance with all governmental and local regulations and statutes

## GOODBYE & FAREWELL

- ♦ Enter into contractual and legal obligations on behalf of the School
- ♦ Insurance policies covering assets of the School
- ♦ General policies for admissions of students and class size

Board Officers: the Board elects four officers from the voting members: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary

### Board Vacancies 2009-2010

VIS will have 6 voting member Board positions open next year. We are inviting any parent wishing to be placed on the Board election ballot to send a short biography (one paragraph describing you, one paragraph about why you want to be on the Board) to the VIS Director before September 10, 2009. As soon as your biography is received it will be printed in all issues of Dragon Tales prior to the AGM. The Secretary will prepare a ballot for the AGM listing candidates and short biographies. Please send your biographies to Steve Alexander at [stevea@vislao.com](mailto:stevea@vislao.com).

### Board Calendar for 2009-2010

- ♦ August 19 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ September 16 Wednesday 7pm Annual General Meeting
- ♦ September 25 Friday 9am to 4pm Board Orientation Gail Schoppert - Election of Board Officers at beginning of meeting
- ♦ September 26 Saturday 9am to 12pm Board Orientation Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ October 21 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ November 18 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ December 9 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ January 20 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ February 17 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ March 17 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ April 21 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting

- ♦ May 19 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting
- ♦ June 9 Wednesday 6pm Regular Board Meeting

### VIS Calendar 2009-2010

Please note that a revised calendar for the next school year is being sent to all families today. The one change, approved by the Board, is the addition of one staff work day on Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. This will add one extra day to the holiday period. The reason for the change is that we must go through two major accreditation preparations next year and need this time for staff to prepare detailed written reports to the agencies. We will be writing a self-study report for CIS/WASC accreditation and another report for the IB MYP authorization. There will be 179 student days next year.

*Continued page 2...*

## Invoices 2009/2010

**By Bryndis Chapman**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

On 15 May 2009, the tuition fee invoices for the next School Year 2009/2010 were sent home with your youngest child. If you have not received your invoice, please contact the VIS office.

Payment Deadline is 1 September 2009. Please pay before the due date to avoid late payment fees. Please note that:

- All payments must be deposited into the VIS bank accounts (the VIS business office will not accept any cash payments for school fees).
- Please provide the Business Office with a copy of your payment confirmation. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or the VIS Business Office.

# From the Boardroom

By **Flavia Usher**  
BOARD SECRETARY

Our last board meeting for the school year was held on June 10<sup>th</sup> in the Administration building. The meeting was called to order at 6.15pm. First up was a request from the teachers for stipend/overtime when on a study trip with students. The Board responded that this is an issue to be addressed within the financial part of the Strategic Plan. From the community, the Sunday playgroup has contributed 880,000 Kip to VIS and requested the Director to inform them which items (toys or sports equipment) that will be purchased with this money.

The Chair reported that the Committee for the American July 4<sup>th</sup> Picnic has requested permission to have this event on the school grounds, and to serve wine and beer. Both requests were granted.

The Facility committee reported that they had a very productive session with Lao Consulting Group in order to work out the concept for a possible Performing Arts center. The Treasurer reported that the current school year will produce a positive net income of USD 100,000, which is primarily due to the higher number of students than budgeted and underlines the steady gain in reputation VIS is enjoying. Currently, we have 323 students and it looks very promising that we will achieve our budget number of 315 students for the next school year. The only material change to next year's budget was that the Board added USD 20,000 for software licensing as discussed at the last Board meeting. Because of financial restraints, the Board decided not to commit at this stage, the entire amount for licensing, but recommended that if there is higher than anticipated enrolment, then the extra funds should be made available to complete the software licensing process as soon as possible.

The Communication committee raised the issue of the latest security incident where a laptop and a cell

phone were stolen from the Administration offices. The Board agreed that the Administration should establish a communication procedure that provides timely, clear and concise communication to the community regarding sudden and important events at VIS, and thus, avoiding miscommunication and unfounded rumors within the community. This was followed by a long discussion on security issues and access policies as well as the lack of respect shown to our guards by some members of the community. The Board urged the Administration to take a more proactive approach to these issues.

The Policy committee brought to a vote a revised Termination policy that clarifies the various steps for termination by the school. This revised policy was accepted by the Board unanimously. The committee is still working on three new documents (Declaration regarding criminal convictions, Waiver to undertake background checks, a Code of Conduct) that will further enhance our child safety policy, and it is anticipated that such documents will be used in the new school year. Some of these documents have already been sent, or will be submitted to the teaching body for their comments.

The Director reported that the strategic plan can now be accessed on the VIS website. He also reported that on June 14<sup>th</sup>, VIS will host an open house for the Lao community, and the recent Youth Night meeting was very successful and these events should start in August. Finally, the Director informed the Board that the CIS/WASC Self Study accreditation renewal as well as the MYP Pre Authorization Visits are all on schedule for next school year. The work load of the self studies will put some extra strain on the teachers and the Director requested that extra time should be allocated for this important work. The Board decided to allocate an extra staff work day for this purpose.

Last item on the agenda was saying good bye to three Board members who are leaving us at the end of the school year. On behalf of the VIS Board, we would like to extend our gratitude to Biliana Vassileva, Per Wirmen and Mike Sweeney for their valuable contribution to the Board and VIS. We truly appreciated working with you and wish you and your families all the best for your next adventures.

# From the Director

*Continued from page 1...*

## Schedule Changes to the School Day

In preparation for final authorization for the IB MYP program to grades 6-10, we need to make some changes to our schedule next year. We will have a 39 period per week schedule next year and a 40 period per week schedule the year after. This will allow us to meet MYP program standards. The extra periods in the Middle School (grades 6-10) next year will be used for an additional Physical Education and Advisory Period in expanding our Personal and Social Education Curriculum and there will be two additional classes added to the Arts Program (Music, Drama, Art). In 2010-2011 we will add one more Technology Class to the MYP schedule. Each period will be 40 minutes long which meets both IB DP and IB MYP standards. Next year only, students from Early Years 4 to Grade 10 will be dismissed at 2:55pm. Homeroom in the morning will begin at 7:50am. The first class each day will begin at 8am. Grade 11 students will have an extra period at the end of the day 3 times per week and Grade 12 students will have an extra period once per week. The master schedule will be posted on our website before the end of June.

## IOWA Test Scores

The IOWA Test Scores will be delivered with the final report cards. If you do not receive it, please let me know.

## Have a Safe and Restful Break

I would like to wish all students, staff and parents a safe and restful school break. Goodbye to all leaving families, I wish you well in your new homes and I look forward to seeing returning families back in August. The first student day is Wednesday, August 12.

### August

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
1-4 New Staff Orientation 5-7, 10-11 All Staff Work Days 12 First Student Day						

# FAREWELL TO VIS STAFF

At this time of year we say goodbye to colleagues and good friends as they move on to new adventures in new countries or their home countries. This week we would like to acknowledge the significant impact that the staff leaving VIS have made to our community. We wish the leaving staff safe travels and new and exciting challenges at their destination.

## Brian Manson

Brian has been at VIS since the beginning of this school year. Brian has developed our students' science skills over the year and established the DP Physics class at VIS. He has brought the Science Lab alive with interesting experiments that have integrated the use of technology and required the students to inquire. We all have enjoyed seeing students doing experiments and creating machines with all sorts of strange equipment out in the corridors by the Science labs. Thank you Brian for the time you have given to the students at VIS. We wish you luck in your future

## Bruce Knox

Bruce has been at VIS for seven years and has been the inspiration and vision behind the development of IT at VIS. He has provided professional development opportunities for staff and used his creativity to design innovative units of learning for the students. He was also the master of databases in the school. He created all our databases, such as that used for our semester reports. In his final year Bruce was one of the first Learning Area Coordinators in the Secondary school, coordinating a very diverse group of teachers from technology, the Arts and PE. Bruce is off to a brand new school in Saudi Arabia, where he will continue working with IT. Good luck Bruce. You will be missed at VIS.

## Christian Sorand

Christian has been at VIS for the last two years. He has set high standards in his classes and is enthusiastic about the teaching and learning of French. He has led the Model United Nations (MUN) and been the staff EARCOS representative. Christian has impressed everyone with his organization and administration. We wish him the best in Tunisia.

## Christine Hanna

Christine has been working with the EY3 students this year. She is reflective

and cooperative in her teaching practices. Christine has used her creativity and passion to provide exciting learning experiences for the EY3 students this year. Ms. Christine is moving to Tunisia where she will teach Kindergarten. IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Reflective and Cooperative.

## Dobi Edwards

Dobi has been at VIS for the last two years. Dobi has inspired many Middle School classes with her enthusiasm for Science, and this was shown to all of the community at the Science Fair this year which was a great success. We wish her success back in Australia.

## Jason Juteau

Jason has been teaching PE at VIS in both the Primary and Secondary school. He has been the After School Activities (ASA) Coordinator and ensured that the programme has had a range of options for students to choose from. He has established stronger connections with outside providers to strengthen ASA and has organized for Basketball experts to come and work with our students. Jason was involved in the Friday Night Basketball League, MRISA, Weekend Basketball competition to name a few. Jason organized the Primary Sports Day and secured sponsorship from Kolao. Jason is passionate about sports and the teaching of PE drawing students into the learning through the use of interesting games and IT. IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Balanced and Committed.

## Jennifer Juteau

Jennifer has been teaching Grade 3 this year. She is an innovative and inspiring teacher who has students travelling in the future, digging for artifacts and investigating the quality of water in our environment. IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Thinker and Confidence. Good luck with your journey to Manila.

## Jodi Nielson

Jodi has been at VIS for the last seven years. She has been a classroom teacher in Primary, the PYP Coordinator, ESL teacher and is presently counseling and providing ESL support to our students. Jodi has also been actively involved in supporting and guiding the Primary Action Group this year. She has empowered these students to suggest ideas, evaluate options and take AC-

TION. Jodi is moving on to Saudi Arabia and we wish her all the best in her new Counseling role. IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Communicator and Empathy.

## Leeanne Smith

Leeanne has been the Grade 6 Advisor, English and Social Studies teacher at VIS. She is passionate about the social and emotional care of our students. Leeanne has provided the new Grade 6 students with the support, encouragement and skills to become independent and successful Secondary school students. Leeanne has implemented new MYP units into English and Social Studies and has taken an active role in the development of these two curriculum areas. She has also served as part of the PTA, Staff Consultative Committee and had a significant input into the growth and development of VIS. Leeanne is moving to China and we wish her and her family an exciting journey.

## Michel Leroux

Michel has inspired many students at VIS over the last three years with a passion for Mathematics, as well as being a driving force in the Student Council and a great contributor to all sorts of other events such as the Cultural Exchange. He has also been one of the first Learning Area Coordinators this year, and has run a tight ship in the Math/Science area. In the classroom he constantly questions and provides his students with the opportunities to take ownership of their learning. He is a master of organization and has a creative flair that has been seen in the stage setups at VIS Idol, Charity Gala and Awards Ceremonies. We have seen Michel learning Arabic ready for his next post and we wish him every success in his new school and in his new adventure in Tunisia.

## Patrice Valere

Patrice has been teaching art at VIS. She is a creative and innovative teacher who has had students creating exciting pieces of public art that will be displayed around VIS. She is very well organized and was a key member of the committee that prepared to host the Cultural Exchange. At the same time she also helped prepare a number of activities for the Secondary students to be involved in.

*Continued page 4...*

## Bye & Thanks from Mr. Philip

By Philip Graham  
ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

I would like to thank all who assisted in the running of the sports programme at VIS this year. Thanks to the overall effort, many students had an opportunity to participate in a variety of events and the results from all teams were encouraging.

In particular I would like to thank the following coaches:

- ♦ Mr Rick Reece who coached the Senior boys basketball;
- ♦ Mr. Cassy Vany for coaching the Senior and Junior soccer plus the hundreds of soccer sessions he conducted with all age groups throughout the year; and

- ♦ Coach Mark who looked after senior girls basketball on Friday nights

Unfortunately a number of our coaches are leaving at the end of the year and their efforts should be recognized:

- ♦ Mr. Steve Jones for his efforts trying to get Junior volleyball off the ground;
- ♦ Per and Daniel who did such a wonderful job with the junior girls soccer;
- ♦ Mr. Jason Juteau who helped carry the programme by coaching very successfully Junior and Senior girls basketball, and helping out with Senior boys soccer
- ♦ Mr. Bruce Knox who for many years has coached at VIS and this year looked after Junior boys basketball.

Obviously when we are losing talent like this there is a big gap to be filled so we are on the search for new volunteers. Those who would like to coach, manage or just want to be involved, please con-

tact me at [philipg@vislao.com](mailto:philipg@vislao.com).

### MRISA 2009/10

Recently all the Athletic Directors from the eight MRISA schools met in Bangkok to finalize the schedule for next year. Here are the dates and venues for the Junior and Senior tournaments for the 2009-10 school year:

- ♦ November 12-15 Senior Volleyball UNIS Hanoi
- ♦ November 26-29 Junior Basketball NISC Phnom Penh
- ♦ January 28-31 Senior Soccer ISPP Phnom Penh, Junior Volleyball ISHCMC Ho Chi Minh City
- ♦ April 1-4 Senior Basketball SSIS Ho Chi Minh City
- ♦ May 6-9 Junior Soccer HIS Hanoi

Early in the next school year more information will be distributed on how to get involved in teams and practices for the first two MRISA exchanges.

## Farewell to VIS Staff

*Continued from page 3...*

Patrice has a passion to bring color into people's lives. We wish you all the best in Hongkong and hope your life is a big splash of color! IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Knowledgeable and committed.

### Roslyn Barlow

Roslyn has been a classroom teacher and the PYP Coordinator here at VIS. Roslyn has also been a mentor for teachers. She has willingly given her time and knowledge and provided opportunities for staff to learn from her extensive teaching experience. Roslyn is a creative and student-centered teacher. She is passionate about the learning that occurs in her classroom and constantly strives to connect the learning with the real world context. Roslyn has had her classes out and about exploring many parts of Vientiane as part of their learning journey. We will miss Roslyn and wish her good luck back in Australia. IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Caring and Commitment.

### Sabra Leppanen

Sabra has been teaching Grade 2 at VIS

this year. Sabra is dedicated to the students' successful learning. She has been involved in a strong collaborative team in Grade 2 and will be missed. Ms. Sabra will be returning to Finland to teach in another PYP school. IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Risk-taker and Commitment.

### Steve Jones

Steve Jones joined us at VIS this year teaching Technology, Mathematics and Science. He has been the Grade 6 Advisor and provided support and encouragement to our students negotiating their first year in Secondary school. Steve is an enthusiastic teacher who has provided opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the design cycle and learn through inquiry. Steve is leaving to complete his Masters and we wish him all the best.

### Tony Fernandez

Tony has been the Counselor at VIS. He has worked with our students to provide them with information about further study and he was the Grade 12 Advisor. Tony was always on the move around the corridors during his year at VIS, talking to everyone, and he saw off the graduating class this year in style, helping them to find universities in several different countries. We wish Tony success in his new job back home in the Philippines.

### Vicki Kable

Vicki has been the SEN Coordinator at VIS for the last two and a half years. She was also one of the first Learning Area Coordinators this year, and has worked successfully with a very diverse range of subjects and staff. She has implemented SEN policies and procedures, provided ongoing support to students and parents, and acted as an advocate for our students. Thank you for all you have given to VIS Vicki and good luck back in Australia. Vicki has IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Knowledgeable and Integrity.

### Diana Kincaid

Diana joined us in April to replace Ms. Melinda. We hope to see Ms. Diana around Vientiane and at VIS next year. IB learner snap shot with an attitude! Open-minded and Appreciation.

### Mr. Bao

Mr. Bao, our school van driver will be retiring this year. He has been a long-standing employee of VIS and we will miss him dearly.

Other members of our community who are leaving are Anna Eriksson and Ola Johanson of the Swedish School and Ginny de la Croix of the Dutch School. All three are returning home. All the best!

## Thinking Ahead

By Kim Green  
MYP COORDINATOR

The final stage in process of transition is thinking ahead. During the leaving process, try to gain an awareness of the realities at the new destination. Where is it that you are going? What are the positives and negatives you can expect to find? What do you need to take? Are your resources for coping in the new place adequate eg. housing, schools, finances, support structures, ability to deal with stress etc.. Be in touch with the new employer/school for clarification on such things well in advance of leaving. Thinking through and finding out about some of these things will by no means prepare you perfectly, but will assist with adjusting to the new destination and what to expect when you arrive at that destination.



And always remember ...

You'll get mixed up,  
of course as you already know.

You'll get mixed up with many strange  
birds as you go.

So be sure when you step.  
Step with care and great tact and  
remember that Life's a Great Balancing  
Act.

Just never forget to be dexterous and  
deft.

And *never* mix up your right foot with  
your left.

And will you succeed?  
Yes! You will indeed!  
(98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)  
KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS

Seuss, Dr. (1990); *Oh, The Places You'll Go*

## END OF YEAR PRIMARY ASSEMBLY

It was lovely to see so many Primary parents at the special end of year Primary assembly last Friday. It was an opportunity to show our appreciation for all that has happened in making VIS a great school this year. The students were a fantastic audience as they acknowledged their peers and teachers being farewelled. Thanks was given to all sections of the school community that make things happen for us in Primary, and in particular the work of the PTA and the class parents. Ms. Jodi presented the Student Action Group with certificates for their contributions this year. The Grade 5s were addressed by Ms. Paula and Ms. Carmel to mark their completion of Primary school and they were presented formally with a certificate by Ms. Carmel and Mr. Alexander. Best wishes to all families leaving VIS to a new location whether it is returning home or moving on to another place. Safe travels and happy summer to all!

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Secondary Teaching Team thanks the VIS community for all of their support throughout 2008-2009. It was great to begin the year authorized to offer the IB Diploma Programme and then see it come to life over the year. During the year we have moved into Candidate Status for the Middle Years Programme and look forward to a pre-authorization visit in the next school year. Next year promises to be another action packed year in Secondary. We wish all our Graduating students good luck with their new journeys. It will be exciting to hear what you all end up becoming when you grow up. To the Secondary staff leaving VIS we hope you enjoy the new challenges that lay ahead. Finally a big goodbye to all the Secondary students leaving us this year. Good luck with your future studies.

## Secondary Awards Ceremony 16<sup>th</sup> June 8:15am

The VIS Secondary Awards Ceremony is an opportunity to recognize students' achievement over the course of the school year. This year's awards ceremony will be held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 8:15am. We encourage you to come and celebrate the successes of our Secondary students at VIS.

We look forward to seeing you all on  
**TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> June at 8:15am.**

## Secondary Student Supplies / Stationery 2009-10

The Secondary stationery list for the 2009-2010 school year has been finalized. This has been attached to Dragon Tales for your information.

Students are expected to arrive on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009 with the itemized stationery. You can purchase all items from the VIS Store or you may wish to purchase some items whilst on holiday.

Please note that there are a few special items that must be purchased from the VIS store such as the IT and Art Workbooks.

All Secondary students will be issued with one PE shirt and one Student Planner at the beginning of the year at no cost. If you wish to have more than one PE shirt this can be purchased from school. If your child loses their planner there is a cost to replace this.

The VIS Store will be open from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2009 for stationery purchases.

Looking for a way to connect with other parents? Or you want to be an active member in the school community?

Come to PTA meetings the  
first Thursday of each month  
8:15am in the Canteen

Or contact Jennifer Eckert @

[VIS.PTA09@gmail.com](mailto:VIS.PTA09@gmail.com)

for more information on how YOU can  
get involved!

See you in August!