

NAUL NEWSLETTER

*Netherlands America University League
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HE'S BACK!!!

Sint of course. And he is looking forward to his next visit to Ann Arbor. In his last e-mail message, Sint told Ton Broos that he and his Pieten would definitely be visiting our fair city on **Saturday, December 4, 2010**. He hopes he can once again meet all of us at **Gretchen's House, 1580 Duh Varren Road** here in **Ann Arbor**. Ton asked if he is now on Facebook so that we might become his friends. Alas, he still doesn't have a clue about Facebook or twitter but said that of course we are all his friends. Well, we are still hoping that, as he travels around the world, someone can help him master social network sites. He did tell us that he looked at our new website **naul.info** and he had nothing but praise for what we have accomplished. Erik Zuiderweg and daughter Mieke get particular congratulations from Sint. Kudos to both!

A registration form is included in this Newsletter. It gives you all the information you need to sign up your kids, grandkids and yourselves to greet Sint and his helpers on December 4. Your contact for registering is Nanna Fecteau. Nanna will coordinate the names of all the children and adults who will be attending. It is still very important that you mail, e-mail, or call your response to Nanna by the deadline of Saturday, **November 27, 2010**. If you miss the deadline, we will not be able to accommodate your children. Please, don't disappoint them.

Sint's other helpers are busy getting ready for his visit. Tanja van der Voo and Lineke Zuiderweg will coordinate the treats for the Sinterklaas party. Tanja and Lineke will be preparing the food and drinks. We can look

forward to delicious bread rolls with all sorts of good stuffing. Members should bring a sweet or savory snack to share. Beer or wine would also be welcome. Tanja or Lineke will answer all your questions. Call Tanja at 734-663-5506 or tvandervoo@comcast.net and Lineke can be reached by phone at 734-741-1757 or famzuid@yahoo.com.

We are counting on **Lillian Dwyer** to MC our annual raffle. Raffle donations from members are welcome: books, CDs, household gadgets, wine, gift certificates, etc. **Mars de Ritis** will take care of the craft activities for the kids prior to Sint's arrival. Several board members are soliciting gifts from local merchants, so we can look forward to a successful raffle with some really good prizes. **Karla Vandersypen** will coordinate all the raffle gifts. If you have something to donate, contact Karla by phone at 734-668-1240 or e-mail to vandersypen@spcglobal.net.

This year Sint has a new helper: Sipkje Pesnichak will provide the music to help us welcome the saint to our evening celebration. Dutch Lunchers will recognize Sipkje.

Finally, and this is very important. Remember that your dues must be up to date to participate. If you haven't paid your 2010 dues, please do so now or be prepared to pay on the evening of the party. If you aren't sure about your dues status, look on the mailing label of this Newsletter. If it does not read 10 or later, your dues are not up to date. Questions about dues should be directed to **Elizabeth Ong**, 734-761-6671 or elisong@comcast.net.

Memories of Sinterklaas and Christmas Past

This year, instead of regaling you with Sint stories and other holiday legends, or telling you about Sinterklaas treats, we decided to solicit our members for their personal recollections of past Sinterklaas celebrations. We also requested that our non-Dutch members tell us about their memories growing up with Santa and other holiday traditions.

First from Hugo Vandersypen” Growing up in the Congo

“I’ll never forget the ‘Sinterklaas avond’ in December 1951 when I was six and one-half years old. The Sint had arrived in Leopoldville, in the former Belgian Congo to visit the ‘brave kinderen’. He was to come to the big auditorium where many families had gathered. Not having been a ‘good boy’, I was extremely worried that I would end up in the ‘zak van Zwarte Piet.’ So, instead of sitting with my family, I was standing way in the back on the right side. Fortunately for me, when the Sint and Zwarte Piet arrived they walked down the left side and proceeded to the stage. The kids were called by name to come up to the stage to visit with the Sint and receive their gifts. When my name, and that of my brother and sisters, was called, still very afraid I reluctantly walked down the aisle to the stage. It was clear that the Sint knew that I had not been ‘voorbeeldig,’ but luckily he was willing to forgive me and I received a book and some nice toys from Zwarte Piet.”

From Janet Broos: Christmas in Philadelphia

“The anticipation of Christmas began with the Thanksgiving Day Parade. Every year, my father would take my sister Dora and me traveling on the streetcar to downtown Philadelphia to see the wonderful floats decked with fairytale images, marching bands in fancy regalia, and some ‘mummers’ dress-rehearsing for the city’s famous New Year’s Day extravaganza. Of course, we were on pins and needles waiting for Santa’s float, which was always the biggest and most beautiful of all. I was a very tiny girl at the time so my father would sometimes have to hoist me on his shoulders in order for me to see over the crowd. After the parade, we went back home for a traditional Italian-American Thanksgiving dinner. (That is another story for another time.) Then a couple of weeks after Thanksgiving, this time with my mother, we’d

again take that, in my mind, magical streetcar ride to the largest downtown department store in the city, to sit on Santa’s lap and tell him in a whisper what we were longing for on Christmas day.

Finally, came the day to begin the Christmas Eve preparations. First came the baking - delicate Italian cookies and cakes made by my mother and some neighbor ladies. The day before Christmas Eve, my father would go to the neighborhood fishmonger, carrying a large bucket, in which he would bring home, a very large, very slithering eel and to my childish self a very frightening creature. Sometimes there would also be some small squid. The eel was the basis of a stew, and the squid for a dish of calamari, all for the Christmas Eve dinner table. Meanwhile, the salted cod was soaking in milk, prior to its transformation into a delicious salad. I should mention here that our Italian Christmas Eve dinner consisted of a great variety of seafood, some winter greens cooked in garlic and olive oil and usually dishes of some sort of peas or beans and for starters, of course, pasta with white sauce or yet again olive oil and garlic. After the family meal, the food and sweets would remain on the table for the visiting aunts, uncles, cousins and other friends. (Today, I think it is amazing that no one became ill from all that fish sitting out for hours).

We put the last ornaments on the Christmas tree and then we kids hung up our stockings – real stockings not the commercial variety we all use now. Since we didn’t have a fireplace chimney, it was always a puzzle to me how Santa got into the house to leave the presents and fill the stockings. I’m sure mama and papa had an explanation to satisfy a small child. We left cookies and milk – my father might have left a glass of wine – and then went off to bed to dream of the good things waiting for us in the morning.

Christmas morning was always a surprise. Our stockings were filled with oranges, apples, Christmas candy and a few coins (no cell phones or i-pods then). Then, with much anticipation, we would have a look at the presents Santa left. Sometimes our dearest wishes came true and alas sometimes not. Indeed, that’s life and memories.”

From Mars de Ritis (with a nudge from Iruschka): Sint and Babo Natale

“Wherever we have lived, our mother has always made sure we have Sinterklaas, even if it's low-key. We put out our shoes with carrots, sing Sinterklaas liedjes and yell "Dank u Sinterklaasje!" up the chimney. To this day, our aunt Trudy sends a package from the Netherlands with small gifts

(usually books) and always drop and chocolate letters (puur/bittersweet for our father) Iruschka's poems are not as full of teasing as our Dutch relatives write, but still personal. On school days, we'd already had a morning of fun and peperkoek which felt like we were "getting away with" a special private pre-Christmas, receiving presents twice!

In the early 1970's, we had four winter celebrations while living for a year in Brescia, in northern Italy.

The first one was Sinterklaas, which was extra "gezellig" as our Oma came to stay from the Netherlands.

On the 13th of December, my brother and I received St. Lucia presents; a doll with a hand-knit white sweater and blue jumper that traveled all over the world as we moved from place to place! She's a bit bald, but her Italian ensemble is still in mint condition!

At Christmas, family from Milan came and together we celebrated "Babo Natale" (Father Christmas) According to an old tradition, we decorated a small pine tree with mandarins. My father is from further south, so we also enjoyed a typical Abbruzzese Christmas dinner with Pan d'Espagna and Zuppa Inglese for dessert.

Our Nonno (Italian grandfather) sent felt stockings with delightful local sweets for the 6th of January, the feast of the Three Kings. In Italy, La Befana is a witch who brings the gifts, or if you have been naughty, puts pieces of coal in your stocking. We still hang this old stocking near the fireplace, a custom we learned about when we moved to the States."

From Ton Broos: Growing up with eight siblings in Weert

"Sinterklaas in the fifties in a large family was a matter of stretching the guilder as far as possible and my mother was a champion in that area. I do not remember how she did it, but she must have been knitting for weeks in the small hours when the kids were in bed. On Sinterklaas morning, all of the children received a hand knitted sweater. Although I would pay a fortune to have that sweater today, we probably were not as thankful as we should have been. Of course we had sung our songs the evenings before, and I quarreled with my siblings whether I had seen the black glove of Piet around the doorpost as we went looking for the scattered pieces of candy that were flying around. My father had been absent for a short period of time and we thought he was upstairs working on his next children's book. As it happened, one of them was

called *The Big Trip to Holland*, about three black boys from Africa who answer an ad from Sinterklaas to be his helpers for his trip to the Netherlands. They get the job and have a lot of adventures, one of them on 'Sinterklaas Island'. I was content when the carrot in my shoe paid off later with another part of Mecano construction, and one year even a Schuco miniature car that would run on a connected wire. Of course, my mother had been making borstplaat, sugar molded in heart shapes, and for the evening meal there would be plenty of pannenkoeken with stroop (pancakes with sugar syrup). Later on, we also got packs of cigarettes from Sinterklaas and not the chocolate or liquorice kind. Did Sinterklaas ever become health conscious? I hope not."

NAUL Babies

NAUL announces two new additions to our family.

Amalia Margareta Maria, born on September 25, 2010 arrived in Ann Arbor weighing 7 lbs 14 oz. and 20 inches long. Amalia's proud parents and loving brother are Julie, Laurens, and Ansel de Jong, Congratulations.

A little bird told us that the **Haenle** family is growing. Two-month-old **Philipp** joins sisters Emilie, Johanna and Christina. All the best to parents Kirsten and Hans.

We hope to see all these NAUL kids at Sinterklaas.

Exhibitions

The Rijksmuseum: Gabriel Metsu, a leading genre painter of the Golden Age. Works from international museums and private collections will be on display, including some recent discoveries. December 16 – March 20, 2011.

The Groeninge Museum in Brugge brings Jan van Eyck and Albrecht Dürer together for the first time, examining the tremendous influence Flemish Primitives had on their eastern neighbors in Central Europe. October 19 – January 30, 2011.

Condolences to Karla and Hugo Vandersypen

At the end of October, Karla's father died in Portland, Oregon where he lived. Karla was in Portland when he passed away. We send our heartfelt sympathy to Karla and her family.

New in New York

Restaurant Vandaag gets a two star review from the New York Times. According to the Times Vandaag (Dutch for Today) is "the kind of restaurant you could move into with a couple of tattered leather armchairs, and sit all day, bare feet on the polished concrete floor, reading novels." The chef Phillip Kirschen-Clark said he didn't come to Vandaag to serve pea soup and rye bread. There are pickled Blue Point oysters, fat pickled sausages, kale, and sweetbreads to name a few. Bitterballen is there as a bar snack but they are made from oxtail meat. Worth a try if you're in New York.

Dutch Detective Series Author Dies

A. C. Baantjer, the Dutch author famous for his detective series featuring Inspector Juriaan de Cock died just two weeks short of his 87th birthday. Baantjer, who was himself a detective in Amsterdam for 28 years wrote 72 De Cock stories. In 1990, a Dutch television series based on his books ran for 12 years. Actor Piet Römer was the star of the series. His books have been translated into many languages including Korean and Chinese. A dozen titles out of the series have been translated into English. Inspector De Cock becomes Dekok in English.

The End of An Era

(from Radio Netherlands Worldwide Press Review, Oct. 11, 2010)

On October 10, 2010, The Netherlands Antilles ceased to exist as a country. The five islands have split up with Curacao and St. Maarten becoming separate countries having special status in the Netherlands while the smaller islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba have become Dutch municipalities. Aruba had separated in 1986.

On Curacao, the transition of power was marked by a ceremony attended by Dutch Crown Prince Willem-Alexander and Princess Maxima. Gerrit Schotte, is the first prime minister of the new country. On Bonaire seven flags were raised, the Dutch flag plus the flags of each Antillean island. Queen Beatrix sent a telegram to all the islands wishing them "good fortune and prosperity".

Dues Reminder

Look at the label on this Newsletter. If it doesn't show 10 or later, your 2010 dues are overdue.

Family	\$30	Individual	\$20
Senior	10	Student	10
Senior Couple	20	Sponsor	50
Sustaining	100		

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