

NAUL NEWSLETTER

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Sint in Ann Arbor

Sint loves to come to Ann Arbor. We have heard from him and he tells us that he will be here a bit early this year. He will arrive on Saturday, November 30, 2013. He apologizes for arriving too early, but it cannot be helped. According to Sint, he is so very busy this year because of the turmoil in the Netherlands surrounding his beloved “Zwarte Pieten”. As a result, all his Pieten have gone on strike. So it has been up to him to make and pack all the presents for the children. Getting the horse ready was quite something. Sint almost forgot the bag of carrots that the horse eats on the road and the special non-skid hoof covers the horse needs for his feet. But all is well and he will arrive as announced at 5:30 PM on Saturday, November 30, at Gretchen’s House, 1580 DhuVarren Road here in Ann Arbor. If you want to welcome Sint to Ann Arbor you should complete the registration form that accompanies this newsletter. It gives you all the information you need to sign up your kids, grandkids, and yourselves. You can mail, e-mail, or phone your response to Sint’s local helper in charge of registration Nanna Fecteau. Register by Tuesday, November 19, 2013. If you miss the deadline, it will be difficult to accommodate your children. Don’t disappoint them. See the registration form included in this Newsletter for Nanna’s address, etc.

Along with the other helpers, Sipkje Pesnichak will lead the children of all ages in music and song welcoming Sint to Gretchen’s House. Els Nieuwenhuijsen will coordinate the snacks for the party. She and her crew will provide us with wonderful bread rolls filled with all kinds of savory treats. We ask that

members bring a sweet or savory dish to share. NAUL will provide beer, wine, and soft drinks, but Els won’t refuse those contributions as well. Please keep in mind that Gretchen’s House is a peanut free facility – so no peanuts or peanut products in the dish you bring. You can reach Els by phone at 734-995-1817 or e-mail elsni@comcast.net.

Anne Frank Celebrates Sinterklaas

We do not always realize how typically Dutch the Sinterklaas festivities are. Years ago a little girl came from Germany to find a refuge in Amsterdam. It was not until she was in hiding that Anne Frank celebrated Sinterklaas for the first time. She writes about it on December 7, 1942 when she was 13: “At 8 o’clock we all filed down the wooden staircase...Daddy opened the big cupboard”. “Oh, how lovely,” we all cried. “A large basket decorated with Santa Claus paper stood in the corner and on top there was a mask of Black Peter. (...) I got a doll whose skirt is a bag for odds and ends [Dutch: mikpoppetje]. Daddy got book ends and so on. In any case it was a nice idea and as no one of us had ever celebrated St. Nicholas, it was a good way of starting.” She also includes two poems in this entry. A year later you can feel that a lot has changed: “When St. Nicholas Day approached, none of us could help thinking of the prettily decorated basket we had last year and I, especially, thought it would be very dull to do nothing at all this year. I thought a long time about it until I invented something, something to make people laugh. I consulted Pim [her father] and a week ago we started composing a

little poem for each person. On Sunday evening at a quarter to eight, we appeared upstairs with the large laundry basket between us, decorated with little figures and bows of pink and blue carbon copy paper. The basket was covered with a large piece of brown paper wrapping on which a letter was pinned. Everyone upstairs was rather astonished at the size of the surprise package.” Anne had taken a shoe from each one and put a poem in it with a little present: coupons for Peter, a small knitted strip for Mrs. Van Pels, one Valerian tablet for Anne, radishes for Edith Frank. As she writes in the accompanying poem to all: “We can’t celebrate this day/In last year’s fine and pleasant way. None supposing that this year/We would welcome Santa here.” Except for Otto, it was in fact the last Sint Nicholas celebration for all of them.

Nijntje News, or Miffy Merriments

When Dutch writer and illustrator Dick Bruna published his first Nijntje book in 1955, he had no idea that it would be such an enormous success. Today the adventures of the little stylized rabbit have sold 85 million copies worldwide and have been translated into 50 languages. She is especially popular in Japan and a new English translation is announced for next year: “Miffy at the Zoo”. Dutch fans can go and visit the Dick Bruna House, part of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, and there is a version in Zeeland dialect: “Nijntje an Zee”. This year the cuddly rabbit is going to see Sinterklaas and will sing Sinterklaas songs in a new book: “Nijntje zet haar schoen” “Miffy puts her shoe out [for Sinterklaas]”. She might get a dark chocolate N, or milk chocolate M (if translated).

This and That

Louis Andriessen composed a symphonic work for the 125 year old Concertgebouw Orchestra. He was asked to write a symphony which was his first in many years for a full orchestra. Some of you may recall Andriessen’s memorable visit to Ann Arbor several years ago.

Condolences

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to long time NAUL member May Ping Soo Hoo on the death of her husband Michael John McIntyre on August 24. After a colorful international career, Michael joined the Law Faculty at Wayne State University where he taught until his untimely death.

Trivia

Did you know that the average Belgian household is worth 446,200 euros, of which 60% is tied up in real estate? This has doubled since 1997, when the average household was worth 230,200 euros. Apart from real estate the average Belgian has savings and investments worth 212,800. Earnings average 3,200 euros per month. A gender gap exists in earnings, with women earning an average monthly salary of 2,989 euros, while the average for men is 3,528 euros.

The Netherlands neither gets away with the gender gap difference. The European Commission in Brussels reports that, retired women in the Netherlands receive pensions that are 40% lower than the men. The Commission further reports that the greatest differences between the pensions of men and women occurs in Luxembourg - 47% and Germany - 44%. The lowest occur in Estonia - 4% and Slovakia - 8%.

Some newsletters-ago, I told about the Belgian waffle van, called “Waffles & Dinges”. We are happy to report that this has been a big success. The owner, Thomas deGeest opened a Belgian waffle restaurant in New York’s Lower east side. Before long Belgian waffles will become New Yorkers favorite snack.

US spooks help Belgian spooks

Sometimes “spooking” is OK, as evidenced by the Belgian Military Intelligence Service (ADIV). Invasive software was discovered on their software, which the ADIV could not debug. Bring in the Americans to solve the problem. Also, the now infamous NSA thwarted possible terrorist acts on three different occasions.

Exhibitions of Interest

On Tuesday, October 22, 2013, the long awaited exhibition *Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Hals: Masterpieces of Dutch Painting from the Mauritshuis*, opened at the Frick Collection in New York. The exhibition remains until January 19. Vermeer's masterpiece, "Girl with the Pearl Earring" is alone in the Frick's Oval Room. Fourteen other masterpieces are on display in other galleries. These paintings are just a small remnant of the paintings produced during the Dutch Golden Age. The New York Times reported that "Historians estimate that during the 17th century, Northern Netherlands turned out in excess of five million paintings, of which only a tiny fraction – between 1 and 10 percent – survive." Among the paintings on exhibit are: Rembrandt's "Simon's Song of Praise", and "Susanna". Frans Hals is represented with his portraits of Jacob Olycan and his wife Aletta, dressed in their regal best. Nicholas Maes's "The Old Lacemaker" is there, as is Jan Steen's "As the Old Sing, So Pipe the Young". WOW! There are more – so order your tickets now for this timed show. Definitely worth a weekend in NY.

PAST EVENTS

On September 26, Arthur Verhoogt presented a lecture "From Karanis, with Love: Personal Letters from Roman Egypt" to NAUL members and friends. Arthur's lecture was fascinating. He told about the University of Michigan's extensive Papyrus collection. The UM's collection, dating from 1000 BC to 1000 AD, is the largest in the Western Hemisphere and ranks fifth in the world. Arthur's enthusiasm and obvious love of his work was contagious and the audience responded with insightful and interesting questions.

On October 22, 2013, the University of Michigan's 18th Annual DeVries-VanderKooy Memorial Lecture was presented by Jan Willem Duyvendak, Professor of Sociology from the University of Amsterdam. NAUL members were well represented in the audience as were students from the Dutch Program and from the Department of

Sociology and other UM units. Professor Duyvendak's lecture was fascinating, providing a glimpse of the problems in the Netherlands with the influx of new immigrants and the "nativism" of the indigenous population. A lively question and answer period followed and persisted even during the reception. Professor Duyvendak's books include "Crafting Citizenship: Negotiating Tensions in Modern Society" and especially "The Politics of Home: Nostalgia and Belonging in Western Europe and the United States." Thanks and congratulations to Annemarie Toebosch for organizing this event.

NAUL Dues

Dues payments were due on January 1, 2013. Look on mailing label of this Newsletter to see if your dues are up to date. If it does not show (13), your dues are late. Categories are:

Couple or family with young children	\$30.
Individual or Senior Couple	\$20.
Individual Senior or Student	\$10.
Sustaining	\$50.
Sponsor	\$100.

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