



Ganja International School

newsletter, January 2009

As usual there is plenty happening at GIS. Some of it is alarming but it is not all necessarily bad.

Closure threat

This update is from Trond Langen, Chairman of the School Board.

It is an exciting time for GIS these days. In the last GIS newsletter we reported that a commission from the Ministry of Education had visited and given a negative report. After that the Min Ed wrote to us, enumerated nine serious shortcomings and in view of these instructed us to urgently stop operations. They also instructed the local Department of Education to take action to stop us. GIS sent a comprehensive reply to all the criticisms, refuting most of them, and asked that this instruction to stop operating be withdrawn. After that we didn't hear anything and assumed that the matter was on hold.

On Thursday of last week (29 Jan) a representative of the Ganja Department of Education and a person from the local council came to GIS. They explained that the Min Ed had not advised them that the instruction was revoked so they would (regrettably) have to act on it. Since then we have been in contact with the Ministry of Education to find out what is happening. It seems that the Minister of Education was not personally aware of what was happening. The last we have heard is that the Ministry will send some people to the school on Monday "to help and guide" us. That sounds more encouraging. We shall see - and of course, let you know.

The Min Ed are now apparently saying that we have three key issues to deal with. This is an improvement on nine. We are certainly not perfect and we have work to do.

This is an exciting time for GIS, so don't forget us.

*Regards,
Trond Langen
Ganja International School*

Central heating

Not the most exciting of subjects, you might think! But it can be surprisingly interesting and give you a flavour of life in Ganja. As we reported in our last issue, the central heating is installed and it works although it could work

better. However the interest is now the matter of fuel. The boiler can run off diesel or gas. Gas is five times cheaper than diesel so of course we would like to use that. To use gas we need permission from the local gas department. This permission is valuable and the gas department would normally expect suitable recompense - something we are reluctant to give. A second issue is where the boiler is located. Years ago the central heating boiler was in a small room within the main building. We placed the new boiler in the same room. But now the rules have changed and this is unacceptable. So we need to construct a small separate boiler house. We think that once we relocate the boiler the gas department will give permission.



Refugees

There is a refugee family that is occupying three rooms on the ground floor – space that GIS needs. The court has ruled that they have no right to be there and must leave. But refugees are a political 'hot potato' in Azerbaijan. The court's executives are under pressure. 'You can get the refugees out, but there mustn't be a scene', they are told. But the court expects that there will be a big scene and so is afraid to act.

AzEd

Because GIS does not have a license it is difficult to retain children when they reach Azerbaijani primary school age. The lower number of children makes GIS uneconomic and as a result, dependent on gift income. Azerbaijan Education is a UK charity that was set up by friends of GIS primarily to help GIS. It is a registered company. AzEd helps GIS by channeling tax-effective giving to GIS and making GIS known in the UK. It currently only supports GIS although its charter allows it to help education in Azerbaijan more generally. AZED has three trustees. Its current director and treasurer, Sarah Chua, will be moving overseas and AzEd needs to find one or two new trustees by 30 April in order to continue to operate. The task of treasurer demands about two hours per week and the trustees meet three or four times a year. According to the job description it is not necessary for the treasurer to be an



accountant, but he or she must be computer-literate and have 'a nice personality'! The positions are unsalaried. However because AzEd is a company the person gains valuable experience in running a company and the work certainly benefits GIS. If you know of anyone who might be willing to help with this, you will find contact details on AzEd's website <http://web.onetel.com/~azed/> or contact me, Simon Bartlett, GIS newsletter editor, contact details at the end.

Secondary-school teacher needed

In September our highest age group will enter UK secondary school age range and we are looking for a secondary-school teacher to help. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please put us in touch.

Xanim Bayramova

By Ruzigar Seyidov

Xanim (pronounced Hanum) Bayramova gives special help to the four children at GIS with 'Special Educational Needs'. She is 25 and graduated from Ganja State University as a primary school teacher.

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself, please.

A: I graduated in 2005. I like reading books, learning foreign languages, and I like learning information from other countries.

Q: When did you start working at GIS?

A: In February 2008. I started as a substitute. In March I started working as a Special Educational Needs teacher. I help SEN students to improve their behaviour, learning and physical skills.

Q: Do you like working at GIS?

A: Yes, I like my work at GIS. I like being close to each child and I like the staff. I am proud that children at GIS are improving enormously. When I came to GIS for the first time the good attitude of the people attracted me.

Q: Do you like teaching SEN students?

A: Yes, of course. I like to help SEN children. When I first get to know them I see that they have some disability and they need help. When you work with them for a while, and you get (specially) a positive result It makes me happy because, when I see SEN child communicates very well with other students. I sometimes find out that they have different skills which other children do not have.



Goodbye to Rick Denison

Rick Denison (seen here relaxing with Vagif Memmedov, the GIS admin assistant) was a member of the GIS management team in 2005 and 2006, a member of the GIS board in 2007 and 2008 and Father Christmas at many GIS Christmas parties. Rick's wife, Karen, has also helped GIS in a variety of ways. They return to the US with their daughter, Ashlyn and cat, Prince Charming this week. Thank you, Rick and Karen, for all your help.



Living history

Sometimes GIS children make history and geography come alive. In this small event put on for parents, Years 2 and 3 showed some things they had learnt about ancient Greece and (picture below) Years 5 and 6 showed what they had been learning about Mexico. This included a Mexican dance, Spanish proverbs (with translation into English and Azerbaijani) and some Mexican games.



If you know of anyone else who might be interested in following GIS's progress through these newsletters, please pass on a copy, or invite them to contact us. We would like to extend GIS's circle of friends.

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