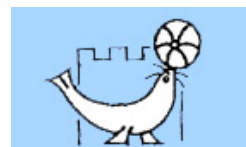


Robbeburg Newsletter



Robbeburg International Playgroup
www.robbeburg.com

Dec 2009

Introduction

Welcome to the final newsletter for 2009. The holiday season is here, Thanksgiving, Sinterklaas, Chanukah and Christmas are crowding in, providing endless "purchasing opportunities" for the kids. But it's important to treat ourselves too! Looking after small children is hard work, from scraping puréed spinach off highchairs, to policing sibling battles, to explaining for the hundredth time, through gritted teeth, why Mummy and Daddy do not appreciate felt tip murals on the floor. Not to mention agonising over the pros and cons of a swine flu vaccine. And as expats, we often don't have close family and friends nearby to take on occasional baby duty, or the Dutch language skills to get the information we want. Whilst chats over coffee and biscuits at Robbeburg offer a lot of support, there are some other great alternatives too. So please see the section below on how to get your life back out of the laundry basket!

Robbeburg News

Committee:

As you have seen from the posters at Robbeburg, we still have some vacant committee positions. Please email Laura or Rachael at committee@robbeburg.com if you are interested in any of the following:

- **Purchasing and Facilities** - pile a trolley high at Macro and make sure we have enough coffee, milk and toilet roll to see us through until the next shop. Contact outgoing position holder Ruth Paans for more info (ruthpaans@yahoo.com)
- **Fundraising**

The next committee meeting will be on Tuesday Dec 15th, from 8pm onwards, at Robbeburg and all are welcome.

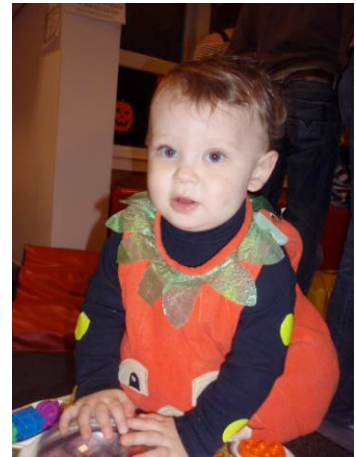
The current committee and their contact details are as follows:

Co Chair	Rachael Moger	co-chair@robbeburg.com
Co Chair	Laura Amiss	co-chair@robbeburg.com
Treasurer	Rebecca Moss	treasurer@robbeburg.com
Secretary and Party Booker	Vikki Walker	partybookings@robbeburg.com
Purchasing and Facilities	Vacancy	
Membership	Lisa Boyle	lisa.boyle@chello.nl
Webmaster	Daniela Gfeller	webmaster@robbeburg.com
Publicity	Billy Dhadwal	billy_gd@hotmail.com
Events Co-ordinator	Erika Reiter	e_reiter21@yahoo.ca
Newsletter Editor	Rosalind Arwas	Rosalind_mushin@hotmail.com
Fundraising	Vacancy	

Groups:

Vikki Walker from Monday group has started a new group on Thursday afternoons, from 2.30pm. Please go along for a trial session or contact Vicki for more info vikki.walker@blueyonder.co.uk

Other:



Zoë's first & Joshua's last Robbeburg Hallowe'en

The Halloween Party on Nov 1st was a sell out event attended by (amongst others!) princesses, devils, Egyptian mummies, fire fairies, pumpkins, clowns and Upsy Daisy. There were delicious home made cakes and biscuits for munching and a less than delicious looking, grungy, scary, slimy, lucky dip, which was a hit with the kids.



Spaghetti Scary Lucky Dip by Rachael



There will be a **Christmas Party** on **Sunday December 13th** from **3-5pm**. Tickets are on sale now from Group Leaders. Santa will be there, resplendent in this season's new robes, with presents for all good children (oh well, that rules out any of ours then!!)

Personal Profiles

Due to lack of volunteers and lack of time to volunteer anyone, the next in the Profile series is me, **Rosalind Arwas**, the Newsletter Editor:



PROFILE:

Children: Leo (2) and Zoë (8 months)

Nationality: British (but the husband and kids are Swiss)

Robbeburg involvement: Newsletter editor, Wed group member since April 2008.

Time in The Netherlands? Almost 2 years

How's your Dutch?...! Taking lessons. Am pleased to be able to understand quite a lot but speaking to anyone over the age of 3 is tricky and writing....forget it!

THE KIDS:

MOST-LOVED household item that makes life easier with kids: Lots of little Tupperware pots so I can batch cook and freeze dinners. An Aquatopia mat to make kid bathtime easier on the knees.

Number 1 tip for travelling with kids: Lots of food and books. Avoid tomato sauce and yoghurt on plane journeys.

Feeding the kids: I have a truly exceptional toddler who eats huge portions of EVERYTHING and says "Mmmm, lekker nice". But he thinks he doesn't like tomatoes so I chop them up very small and hide them in couscous.

Children's favourite books: Too many to mention but Leo's current hit list includes Duck in a Truck, Barbapapa, Morris's Disappearing Bag (a leftover from my childhood) and a set of little books featuring characters from In the Night Garden. Zoë doesn't like books unless she can chew them.

Favourite things to do with kids in Amsterdam: Robbeburg! And the Vondel Park Playgrounds, the goat farm in the Bos and the paddling pools. Leo likes to go to Station Zuid, go up and down the escalators and lifts and wave at the trains. Even better is actually getting on a train and going to Schiphol to watch the planes.

ME:

Life before kids: Management accountant (sometimes miss it, sometimes even pooey nappies seem preferable! Starting a new job next week....)

Hobbies and interests: Am I supposed to have time for these?! Does being addicted to Facebook count? Top favourite is reading and going to my Book Club, closely followed by baking cakes and cookies (especially if someone else is doing the washing up) Guess I should also include going to the gym as I've just joined one.

Reading: A Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde

Listening to: Dikkertje Dap, Mir gönd in Zoo and The Wheels on the Bus (with my tri-lingual toddler)

Favourite film: Harry Potter 6, it was worth the babysitter

Ideal child-free dream holiday destination: A few months in luxury hotels in Asia, Australia and New Zealand, catching up with friends who've moved there and soaking up sunshine

Essential handbag item/s: Baby wipes and 18 changes of clothes for my ridiculously sick daughter. Food and car keys for my food-and-car obsessed son. A book for me (like I'm going to get time to read it!)

AMSTERDAM:

Loves: It's unique! When you stand on a bridge in the canal ring you really couldn't be anywhere else. And it's beautiful. And I love my bike and bakfiets.

Hates: The bread is not nice (compared to Switzerland) and customer service is not a widely recognized concept.

Misses about home: Friends. Family. Mountains. Theatre. Chocolate chips, ground almonds and other baking essentials.

AND FINALLY:

Heineken or Amstel? Amstel

Salt and vinegar or Cheese and Onion? Cheese and Onion

How life should be....5 tips for making life with kids more like the life you used to know

1. www.thuisbezorgd.nl

Remember the days when you used to go out to eat 5 times a week because you were working late and the fridge was just a cupboard for alcohol? Although you won't be able to do that again until the kids have left home and/or you've finished paying off the childcare related overdraft. you can pretend to with this website (once you've located the alcohol behind the milk and Danootje yoghurts) It lets you order takeaway from a huge range of different restaurants and you can even pay online.

2. www.spazuiver.nl

Treat yourself to a day or evening at this spa in the Amsterdamse Bos, from EUR 25 or put luxury massage and facial on the Sinterklaas, Birthday etc wish list. Other good pampering places are www.dayspa.nl and www.soapcompany.com. At the Aveda spa, a haircut comes with complimentary head and hand massages and touch up for your make up.

3. www.museumkaart.nl

EUR 35 will buy you free entrance to over 400 museums in the Netherlands for one year. This means it doesn't feel like a waste of money to take the kids to a museum for only as long as their attention span will tolerate.

4. www.meetup.com

Meet some new people because they share an interest with you other than dealing with toddler tantrums. This website will tell you if anyone in Amsterdam has started a group that caters to your particular hobby and, if they haven't, you can start your own. Existing groups in the Amsterdam area range from wine tasting, theatre going, book clubbing and Dutch language learning to Buddhist meditation, spiritual human evolution and casino affiliation.

5. www.amsterdamsuitburo.nl

The Amsterdam Uitburo is your "what's on guide" for theatre, dance, opera, concerts, festivals and other cultural events taking place in Amsterdam plus you can book tickets on the website too. It is all in Dutch (unfortunately for us linguistically challenged foreigners!) but it's a great starting point for seeing what's out there. The www.iamsterdam.com website is also a good source of information and is also available in English. Living in Amsterdam, we are actually really spoilt by the number of organisations providing quality English language comedy and drama (Boom Chicago, In Players, Queens English Theatre Company to name just the ones I have enjoyed in the last three months) so book a babysitter and get out there!

And how life has changed....5 things you thought were either disgusting or hilarious 5 years ago

1. Picking up a child and sniffing it's bottom in public
2. Changing a nappy on the sofa
3. A middle aged man wearing a brightly coloured baby sling dancing at a party
4. Toddlers accompanying you to the toilet and providing a running commentary on your activities therein
5. Going to bed at 9.30pm

ROBBEBURG BOUNCY CASTLE:

- Available to rent for parties (Robbeburg members only)
 - EUR35
 - Easy to inflate and deflate
 - Can be used indoors or out
 - Approx 2m x 2m jumping space
 - Kids love it!
- Contact Jennifer Bridle for further information on partybookings@robbeburg.com

