

the partnership

A publication for Companies and Services participating in the Luxembourg International Business Community

A Blast from the Past!

ISL Alumni Reunion Celebration

a global
future
through an
international
education

By all accounts the very first ISL Luxembourg Alumni Reunion, "A Blast from the Past," held on 17-18 June 2005 was a resounding success! The 115 student alumni joined a large number of current and former faculty and parents for a two-day get together that included a barbecue at the school, tournaments on the sports' field and in the gymnasium, and a dinner-dance at the Parc-Alvisse Hotel.

Former students who graduated as recently as 2004 joined alumnus Chris Raup from the Class of 1975 to celebrate their affiliation with the institution known today as the International School of Luxembourg. Joining them were some 100 student alumni who had graduated from high school during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Participants came from as far away as Australia, Brazil, Hawaii, Japan, Korea and China, not to mention North America, to take part in the festivities.

In addition to guest speaker Marianne Hoffer-Hubert, the most senior faculty alumna, other faculty alumni in attendance included former Upper School Librarian Maryann Barteau who now lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and former Director Gerry Shields who resides in Farmville, Virginia. Former science teacher Helen Whyss travelled from her home in the Loire Valley of France, and former history teacher Paul Aston (who has recently relocated to Beirut, Lebanon) came over from the UK. Former teachers Lynne Thill and Margaret Love, Lower School counsellor Bev Agolini, and registrar Jackie Bray, who still reside in Luxembourg, also took part. Romain Hoferlin, teacher and Assistant Principal during the 1970s who went on to teach in the Luxembourg school system, was present at the barbecue on Friday evening.

Not all of the student alumni were actually graduates of the school. The transient nature of the ISL community means that the majority of students only stay for about two to five years. In many cases, this is time enough to establish lifelong friendships, but perhaps not long enough



Chris Raup, Class of 1975

to actually graduate from the school. Of the student alumni present at the reunion, 91 were graduates while 24 others had attended the school at some point during their formative years. Jieun Suh from Korea is a case in point. Even though she only completed grades 5-7 at what was then known as the American International School of Luxembourg (1994-1997), Jieun still feels a strong connection to the school. She made the trip to Luxembourg from Hamburg, Germany where she was taking part in a collegiate study abroad programme.

The reunion weekend was launched at the annual Faculty-Staff Barbecue held at the school on Friday evening. ISL Director Clayton Lewis explained that this "seemed to be the best venue to bring the highest number of current and former faculty members together with student alumni." Indeed. Some 300 people enjoyed sausages, steaks, salads and desserts at the event which took place on the last day of the 2004-05 academic year. Teachers, staff, and former students who hadn't seen each other for years spent the evening catching up on old times. The animated conversations that carried on late into the night are a measure of the far-reaching influence of the school.

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Although Friday's barbecue stretched into the warm summer night, former Athletic Director "Coach" Kasinathan had everybody up early the next day for an active athletic agenda. Teams of "Past" alumni played games against "Present" students in a number of sports including volleyball, soccer, basketball, and softball. It is worth noting that the "Past" teams won all the games with the exception of men's soccer. Coach Jason Muhl lamented, "We were a little too old for those young guys!" Paul Aston added that "it was a great weekend and I had enormous fun." Enthusiastic spectators cheered all the athletes. More conversation took place over a buffet lunch and once the sports activities had concluded it was time to get cleaned up for the evening's party.

The dinner-dance at the Parc-Alvisse Hotel was attended by 124 people. Disc Jockeys Shohei Hasegawa from Japan and "Rockin'" Ron Tuffel from Luxembourg delighted the dancers with their musical selections and animated commentaries. The entertainment continued into the wee hours and a good time was had by all. Alumnus Jason Muhl commented that it was the best reunion he had ever attended and that he would like to see more get-togethers of this kind. Feedback following the event echoed this sentiment. Most, like Jonathan Foulds, want to know when the next reunion will take place. He writes, "Thanks for organising a great weekend there. Tiring but ultimately very much worth it. I look forward to the next one." Tim Allen adds, "I don't think it could have gone better! I had a great time, as it seems did everyone else!"

Plans for future reunions are already being discussed. Director Clayton Lewis has mentioned that he would like to see the school host a "Blast from the Past" in Luxembourg about every five years. On the other hand, the school's 50th anniversary will take place in 2012, which as Coach Kasi points out is "just around the corner!"



Minister of Education Speaks at Graduation

The International School of Luxembourg was honoured by the participation of Mady Delvaux-Stehres, Luxembourg Minister of National Education and Vocational Training, as the commencement speaker at its June graduation ceremony.

Mrs Delvaux-Stehres spoke about education in Luxembourg and ongoing efforts in the public education sector. She also recognized the role of ISL as an important factor in the development of the Luxembourg economy. In her closing remarks, Mrs Delvaux-Stehres addressed her best wishes to the 2005 graduates, congratulated their families, and left them with a parting thought emphasizing both opportunities and responsibilities, "the doors of success are open.... Now it's up to you."



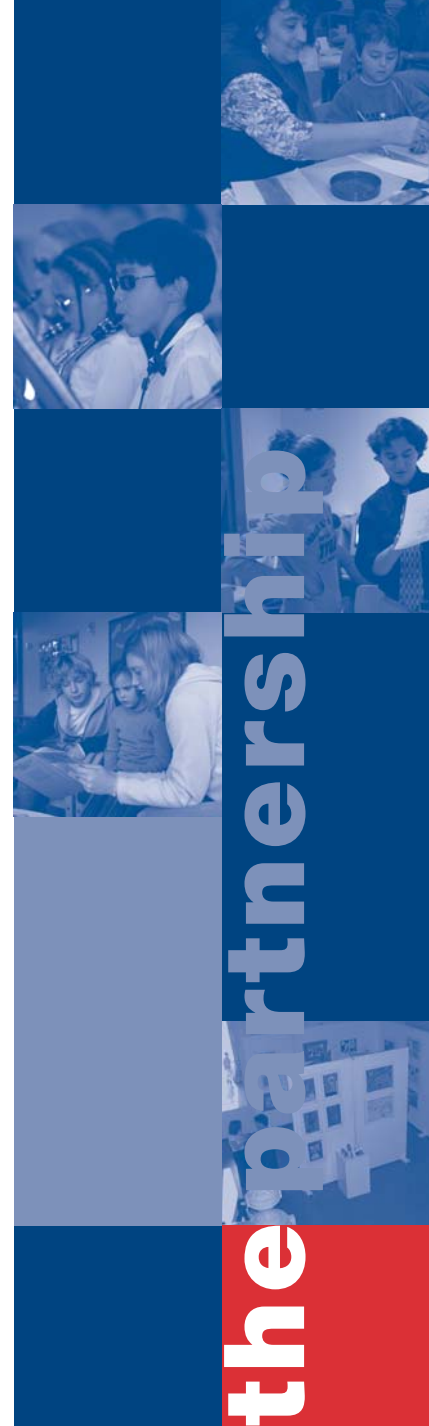
Director Clayton Lewis noted that Mrs Delvaux-Stehres was invited to address the graduates in recognition of the government's support of the school and the mutually beneficial relationship that has been forged over the years between ISL and the government of the Grand Duchy.

Tsunami Relief Effort



ISL students, parents, and staff load donated goods collected from the ISL Community to aid victims of the December 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia.

In a real team effort, *Streff Movers* supplied packing boxes while *Schenker Luxembourg* and *Arthur Welter* provided ground transportation of ISL Community donations to *Cargolux* who then airlifted them to Thailand. The goods were subsequently delivered to the *School for Life Orphanage*, a charity that has been supported by Middle School students since 2003. "A total of 386 boxes were shipped," relates Leila El-Chehabi, Middle School Coordinator and one of the organisers of the tsunami relief effort at ISL. "These donations, which included a variety of items ranging from school supplies, to clothing, to camping gear, have really made a difference to the lives of children who have already lost so much."



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ISL brochures as well as **the partnership** newsletter are available free of charge.

ISL Opens its Doors to Record Enrolment

ISL inaugurated its 2005-06 academic year at the end of August, opening its doors to a record 677 students. This represents a 12.8% increase over the 600 who started school at the same time in 2004.

"A large number of new applicants at the beginning of the school year is nothing new," explains ISL Director Clayton Lewis. "But what has changed is that fewer families seem to be leaving the school. It is the combination of these factors that explains our record enrolment." Growth has spread to all areas of the school. At the present time, 12 of 15 grades are full and waiting lists have been established for a total of seven levels in Pre-School through Grade 8. Traditionally, classes fill up more quickly at the early years' level and in the primary grades, but for the first time the Middle School (Grades 6-8) is filled to capacity and so are some of the classes in the High School (Grades 9-12).

Enrolment trends.... Where are the new students coming from?

The last five years have seen a slight drop in the percentage of students from the USA (-5%) and the UK (-2%) as well as from Japan (-4%) and Sweden (-2%), all traditionally well-represented in the school. This does not actually mean that there are fewer students from these countries, but rather that the demographic distribution is changing. More local students

have joined the school; Luxembourg's enrolment has jumped from 18 students in 2000 to 44 today. The Scandinavian countries have significantly increased their enrolment, especially Denmark with an enrolment of 32 students, a mammoth increase over its 2000 enrolment of just two. Iceland now represents 3% of the student body with 18 students. Closer to home, Germany has also increased its enrolment more than twofold. In addition, significant increases have been logged in enrolments from Belgium, France, and The Netherlands. It is worth noting that approximately 35 different nationalities are represented in the student body and that many students come from bicultural or multicultural families.

Implications for the future

Space is at a premium and the Board of Governors is actively seeking solutions to alleviate the situation. Thus far, the school has managed its growth by increasing the number of sections of classes per grade level from two to three. However, all classrooms are now in use throughout the day. "We are upholding the limits that we set for each class," stated Lewis, "even when it means having to turn away children whom we would like to enrol." Lewis added that the Ministry of Education is aware of our situation and wishes to support the construction of additional classrooms as part of the existing infrastructure.

Leir Prize Awarded by Clark University

ISL student Maxime Rischard was awarded the first annual Henry J. Leir Prize from the Leir Center Luxembourg-Clark University (LCL-CU) for his essay on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Maxime received his prize from Dr Sunhee Kim Gertz, Co-Director of the Leir Luxembourg Program-Clark University at the annual academic awards ceremony for Upper School students that was held in June.

Because of the shared interest of both the Leir Center and ISL in furthering academic excellence, the Leir Center has established the annual prize of €500 which is awarded to a grade 11 student for an essay in English. Entries are solicited from eligible students and the winner is chosen by a committee of ISL faculty under the auspices of the ISL Humanities Department.

The Leir Prize was created in honour of Henry J. Leir, American entrepreneur and philanthropist of German-Jewish origin who left Germany for Luxembourg in the 1930s, established himself in the metal and mining industries, and later emigrated to the USA. Clark University of Worcester, Massachusetts, founded the Leir Luxembourg Program with the primary goal of "strengthening the international dimension of teaching and research at Clark University, especially through close relations with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg." The Leir Center Luxembourg is based at the Château de Schengen and proposes a study-abroad programme during the month of May for university students as well as an array of conferences, seminars and student internships.



Dr Sunhee Kim Gertz and Maxime Rischard

11th and 12th Graders Take Part in Presentation Skills Workshops

Some 20 eleventh and twelfth grade students were afforded the extraordinary opportunity to take part in a full-day presentation skills workshop in early September. Upper School Guidance Counsellor Ros Geuss organised two workshops on successive days for 10 students each. The workshops were conducted by Jeanne Tingo, an experienced professional in communications and sales management training, who is currently the Managing Director of *IMPAX Communication* in New York.



Jeanne brought her expertise as an executive coach working with business clients who need to communicate effectively to the task of training students to make cogent oral presentations. Participants were given three short assignments to prepare in advance so that no time was lost on the day of the workshop. Topics that were covered included: communicating to an audience and controlling anxiety; how you look and sound, breathing and pacing; tips for creating visuals; how to present your visuals and handle equipment;

and analysing your audience. Students had the opportunity to learn and practise these skills in small groups. They were videotaped and feedback was given about their presentations.

Students' comments about the workshop echo those of *IMPAX* business clients who declare that Jeanne is "one of the best coaches in the business" and rave about her style which is "supportive, tough and fun." Malin Lindström, who will graduate from ISL in June 2006, explains how she benefited from the training. "Before this programme, I actually thought I had OK presentation skills, but listening to the tips that were given and watching myself on tape after every speech really made me see how to improve. I'm not sure if I changed, but speaking in front of a group does not seem as difficult anymore." Classmate Eleanor West agrees. "I personally found the workshop very helpful. It taught me important skills in presenting that will always be useful for the future, whether at university or even after. Although challenging, the workshop made for an interesting and enjoyable day."

"The aim of the workshop was to help students learn specific skills that will help them become more effective speakers and develop confidence when making oral presentations. I am certain that this aim was fulfilled," noted Mrs Geuss. "We feel fortunate that we were able to provide this experience for our students."



Partnership Profile



Retired Modern Languages teacher and most senior faculty alumna at the June reunion, Marianne Hoffer-Hubert remembers...

In 1960 Marianne Hubert left Luxembourg for Sturgis, South Dakota in the USA where she pursued a degree in teaching at *Black Hills State Teachers' College* (now *Black Hills State University*). Diploma in hand, she went on to teach in the states of Wyoming and Montana for three more years. Homesick for her native Luxembourg, she finally returned in 1966 with plans to go back to the States the following year.

However, a visit to her family doctor in Luxembourg changed the course of her life forever. It happened that Marianne's doctor was also the doctor at *Dupont de Nemours*. He suggested that he might be able to help her get a job at the *English Speaking School* (also known as the *Dupont School*) if she would remain in Luxembourg. "So he made me an appointment and there I met my former English teacher who at that time was the head of the school... and I got the job. There were 18 people who wanted it, but I got it!" It was Marianne's former English teacher, Professor René Schaaf, who had started the *Dupont de Nemours Private School* in 1963. "He wasn't very happy with my South Dakota accent," Marianne tells us, "but he hired me anyway!"

And so it was that Miss Marianne Hubert came to the school in December 1966 to take over an elementary class from a teacher who was leaving in the middle of the school year. The shoes of her predecessor were not easily filled. "My American 3rd and 4th graders informed me, 'our teacher was a Yugoslavian princess!' How do you follow that?" But follow it she did. Marianne taught grades three and four in the same classroom. "It was very challenging. I had to do quite a few different things that I had never done. Having third and fourth grade together was the biggest challenge because I had done high school teaching in the States. When you're in a small school you have to do so many different things... you have to do everything! Now the school has grown and things are more highly specialised. I did everything: reading, writing and even music, swimming and gym. We were in charge of the kids all day long. We had no breaks: only a half hour lunch and we would alternate taking the kids to the park so that we could have a break."

At that time the demographics of the school were very different from today: most of the teachers were Luxembourgers and most of the students were American. Yet the school was constantly growing. "We grew all the time: sometimes rapidly, sometimes more slowly. When the banks came (in the 1980s) there was a big surge in enrolment." The school began to see an influx of different nationalities, an English as a Second Language programme was established, and the 1982-83 school year brought yet another change of name when the *American School* became the *American International School*.

The Luxembourg government has supported the school from the time of its founding by providing the premises for it to operate. The school occupied a number of different sites in the early years, including the Servais House on avenue Marie-Thérèse and part of the premises of the old Lycée Technique - Ecole de

Marianne Hoffer-Hubert

Commerce et de Gestion (ECG), only a stone's throw from our current home on the Geesseknäppchen. In 1977, when the school moved to the avenue de la Faïencerie in Limpertsberg, the entire school was initially housed in the building that many current students and staff still remember as the Lower School building. It didn't take long to outgrow it. Soon the Upper School and Administrative offices moved to the adjoining former convent that Marianne remembers from childhood visits to her aunt who lived there as a nun. A few years later, Matthew Rhodes became the first graduate of our school; he was the Class of 1980! The following year four seniors graduated. A capital fund drive was launched to build a new gymnasium that was completed in 1986, the school expanded into the Don Bosco building behind the avenue de la Faïencerie premises, and finally an Early Learning Centre was built in 1996 to accommodate all the new students. Plans for the construction of the Geesseknäppchen campus were introduced in the late 1980s and the decision to build and move was taken as early as 1992. Marianne remembers that when talk of the new campus began she was sure that she would finish her teaching career right around the corner from her birthplace. "It's a little bit ironic because I was born in a house on rue Giselbert and I always thought, well, I'm going to finish up at a school that is located 100 metres from where I was born. But by the time I retired (in 1997) we were still in Limpertsberg. So I don't really feel a connection to this campus. Of course the school was growing such that we needed this building and I'm sure that if I had moved here I would have felt at home here too. But because I didn't, the building doesn't mean that much to me."

At the end of the day it is the institution, and especially the people who have contributed to its evolution, more than the name or the location, which inspires an emotional attachment and fond memories. Marianne is now happily retired after 30 years and remains in close contact with former colleagues, students, and parents of students who have become lifelong friends. She was delighted to take part in the June reunion and felt honoured to be asked to address the participants as the 'most senior faculty alumna.' She thought the reunion was well-organised and that "the school went way out to do something special. I think everybody had a good time and was happy to be here." Among many others, she was particularly pleased to meet Chris Raup (Class of 1975, most senior student alumnus attending the reunion, now living in the USA) who she remembers seeing "every morning walking to school on rue Giselbert" back in the days when the *International School of Luxembourg* was known as the *English Speaking School of Luxembourg*.

