



THE ELDER DRAGON

ISB Alumni Newsletter

Vol 2, Issue 1 / December 2012

www.isb.bj.edu.cn/news



UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS:

- London: January 19th
- Boston: February 6th
- Toronto: February 11th
- San Francisco: February 16th

WELCOME, "ELDER DRAGONS"

Establishing ISB's first alumni association was the graduation gift to the school from the Class of 1995. The Class of '95 named the alumni association Lao Long (老龙), or The Elder Dragon. Several newsletters followed and then unfortunately, as people moved on, the momentum faded. In the succeeding years ISB has had an alumni office staffed with dedicated people who have helped to locate and reconnect alumni with the school. With the development of the school's Strategic Plan IV, the need for creating meaningful partnerships outside the traditional school "walls" was identified. Where better to begin than with a focus on reconnecting with alumni and engaging them with current students and the school!

One of the original aims of Lao Long still rings true today: "Though you think you will never forget ISB, memory fades quickly, and one day even the best of memories will be lost forever, unless there is something to keep you in touch, a resource that lets former students share their experiences, both old and new. So support the Alumni Association Newsletter. Your memories depend on it." In this age of social media, it's never been easier to reconnect with former classmates and teachers, and to make a contribution to the ISB students of today by partnering with them, and sharing your experiences.

Add Alumni-International School of Beijing facebook page to your favourites! <http://www.facebook.com/AlumniISB>

Meet the Alumni Coordinators!

Actually, for most of you, no introduction is needed--if you were part of the ISB Community at any time during the past 15 years, then our Alumni Coordinators, Chris and Mick Green, probably touched your lives in some fashion. Mick Green taught Grade 11 and 12 IB economics, while Chris was one of the Elementary School Assistant Principals.

After "retiring" from ISB after 15 years, Mick and Chris Green have taken on the roles of Alumni Coordinators for the school. They are working from their home in Thailand to reconnect ISB alumni with each other and with the school. They are ably supported by Mel Ker, a longtime member of the ISB

Communications Department. Mel supports the alumni program by keeping the database updated, arranging events, and welcoming alumni who visit the ISB campus. Mel has been at ISB for ten years.



Mick Green



Chris Green



Mel Ker

"We know alumni are out there making significant contributions to their communities and the world, and we aim to reconnect them and engage them with ISB." – Mick Green

Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon

A letter to the ISB Alumni Community from Tarek Razik, our eleventh Head of School

Dear ISB Alumni:

What does it mean to be an alumnus of ISB?

Since I'm still here—and only in my third year as an ISB parent and Head of School—I don't know the answer from personal experience. But what I've observed in my travels, in my reunion dinners with former ISB students around the world, in my meetings with former ISB teachers, staff, administrators and parents, is that there is a bond. It means something important to have been part of this school; our alumni take pride in their connection.

In many parts of the world, to be an alumnus means only to be a graduate. International schools are different—our student populations are somewhat transient, not by choice but by necessity. In the early days of ISB, when we were an embassy school, students stayed only about three years—the length of time of their parents' embassy posting. The teaching culture at international schools has often mirrored this impermanence, with teachers and staff typically staying for three to five years.

Interestingly, though, this trend is changing. This year's graduating class of 171 students includes 90 who have been at ISB since grade 7 or earlier, and 20% of our staff have been with us for more than a decade, including six key staff members who have been here 15 years or longer. (Chris and Mick Green, our alumni coordinators, also taught at ISB for 15 years.) This kind of longevity is a big change for an international school, and it is significant on many levels.

At the same time that our student and teacher population stays longer, some of our young graduates also come back to Beijing. Having grown up as Third Culture Kids, they're comfortable in careers that involve an international perspective and global travel, and many find ways to return to Beijing. It has been really exciting to see this trend strengthening, and to get to know young people who have known ISB longer than I have. Skilled in Chinese,

and comfortable in this fast-changing culture, they come back, either as short-term emissaries, or to return to long-ago family roots here in China. We already have a Board member who is an ISB graduate. Before long, we'll have second-generation students at ISB.

Alumni who don't come back to Beijing still manage to find each other. Through social media, university associations, and ISB alumni events around the globe, our students and families are reconnecting with one another and discovering bonds that have lasting value. I am fortunate to see this in my travels, and it is inspirational.

I'm excited about this new alumni newsletter, and about the terrific connections that Mick and Chris Green, with the help of Mel Ker, are making amongst our alumni around the globe. I hope you will support these efforts by staying connected to ISB.

Remember: once a Dragon, always a Dragon.

Warm regards,



Tarek Razik
Head of School



Dr. Razik getting to know some future ISB alumni in his first week at school in August 2010.

Lao Long 老龙? or Rui Long 瑞龙?

A popular topic of discussion among alumni has been the name of the ISB Alumni Association. It was originally named Lao Long (老龙), The Elder Dragon, by the Class of 1995. (See facsimile of first page of the association's newsletter, below.) This name is in keeping with ISB's mascot of the dragon. However, there has been some sensitivity to the word *lao* as being not quite complimentary, so there is a suggestion that the name could be Rui Long (瑞龙.) Rui suggests being matured with wisdom, rather than with the mere passing of time.

We'd love your feedback on this decision. Add your comment to the Facebook page:

Alumni – International School of Beijing. <http://www.facebook.com/AlumniISB>



老龙
Lao Long

The Elder Dragon

December 15, 1995

Volume 1 No. 1

The Official Alumni Newsletter of the International School of Beijing

A Dragon Is Born

By: Moon Chung

The ISB Alumni took its official place as part of the school during last year's graduation. It was the graduation gift from the class of '95 and was presented by Jennifer Hird and Leila Akahloun to Mr. Atkins. This would never have happened had it not been for the information from Mr. Prescher and Mrs. Stein's persistence. She felt strongly that the Alumni should be a part of the school and got everything organized. After much consideration, the class of '95 decided on presenting to the school over 250 US dollars to begin the Alumni. Many thanks go to Justin Fong and Connie Frehsee for beginning their own 'Beijing Connections' where we were able to obtain information about the previous graduates which really gave us the foundation for beginning the alumni. The alumni was handed over to two graduates who are to continue their studies in Beijing. They and three graduates' mothers met with Mrs. Stein and Ms. Norah Crone to decide on how to make it work. Ms. Crone has been an immense help in getting the alumni going, supplying us with the information that we needed concerning the financial aspects and putting equipment at our disposal.

The Making of the Alumni Association

By: Anthony Roy

As the 1995-1996 school year began, very few seniors were thinking about an alumni newsletter. As a senior myself, I can say that it was a complete surprise when someone approached me about it. The International School had never before had anything of this nature, but the prospect of setting one up immediately took root in many people's minds.

Charles Hwa, the student organizer for the newsletter, contributed a huge amount of after-school time contacting different people about various article possibilities, setting up interviews, and other time consuming tasks. Other students have

Inside:

- Letters: Correspondence from the Alumni, pages 6, 7.
- Arrivals and Departures at ISB, pages 4, 5.
- The new International School of Beijing? page 6.
- Saying Goodbye to Mr. Eaton, page 2.
- ISB in Osaka, page 3.
- Special Insert- Membership Form for the Association.

also helped to make this possible, of course. Peter Ton worked on the format of the entire newsletter, taking each person's individual disks and converting all the articles to one format. He was pretty much the computer genius who figured out how to make this newsletter look like it does.

As for the others, well there really are too many to list here. More important is actually saying why all these students felt compelled to work on the newsletter. The seniors, of course, are doing it so that they can enjoy the luxury themselves once they graduate, an admirable cause. But in addition to seniors there are also juniors, sophomores, and even some freshmen. These people embody the word "school spirit." They will not be feeling the benefits of this newsletter for at least a year, some may even be leaving the school before they graduate! These people are the ones who have made this project especially pleasurable, because they serve to remind us that this newsletter is just the first one in a series that will serve to connect the alumni of ISB forever.

This is a tribute to the class of 1995. They have been the ones that have presented you this resource, a resource that will one day, I hope, span the far reaches of the globe. What you see here today is only a simple newsletter, but maybe, just maybe, it will one day become much more than that. Imagine receiving the newsletter in five years. Though you may think you will never forget ISB, memory fades quickly, and one day even the best of memories will be lost forever, unless there is something to keep you in touch, a resource that lets former students share their experiences, both old and new. So support the Alumni Association Newsletter. Your memories depend on it.

The original newsletter of the ISB Alumni Association was published 17 years ago. A facsimile of the first page is shown left.

Recent Alumni Events

On this page and the next, Mick Green reports on two big alumni events of 2012: the ten-year reunion in Beijing for the Class of 2002, and a night on the town in Seoul, Korea, with a wide-ranging group of alumni.

Beijing Ten-Year Reunion

The International School of Beijing held its first official 10-year reunion in Beijing in September 2012, with a variety of gatherings and activities organized by alumni coordinator Mel Ker. On Friday, alumni spent time on campus, taking a tour of the school and conducting an alumni chat to the high school and middle school students. Alumni visited classrooms and lunched with staff and faculty. A special thank you to Matthias Boyer (our first alumnus to join the ISB Board of Trustees), Andrew Wu, Eugene Bregolat, Walter Lam, Philip Hu, Lei Jin and a recent graduate Stephanie Zhan, who took time out of their busy schedules to visit our campus and offer advice and support for ISB students. The memory wall was a highlight for those who attended on Friday, and the pictures brought back fond memories of their time at ISB and the old Lido campus. It was also the first opportunity for alumni to receive their alumni identification tags, which allow them access to ISB's facilities.

The highlight of the reunion was the dinner held on Saturday at the Marriot Courtyard Hotel. A large number of students attended, and special thanks are due to Lei Jin, Jing Young Seok, Lillian Chen, and Daisuke Yanaoka, who traveled from Indonesia, Korea, Guangzhou and Japan, respectively. Mathias and Mel put together a slide show of old photos which elicited many comments and laughs as memories were recounted. The bond and friendship among alumni was obvious and genuine and the faculty who attended thoroughly enjoyed their chance to reconnect.

A huge special thank you to Mel Ker, who worked so hard to make this first 10-year reunion a success. Thanks also go to alumni representatives in New York, Jessica Yang and Jessica Shu, who organized a very successful Stateside reunion for many who could not be in Beijing for the occasion.

Joining us from the class of 2002 were:

Eugene Bregolat
Mathias Boyer
Philip Hu
Sarah Fenwick Ross
Jin Young Seok
Walter Lam
Lillian Chen
Lawrence Lin
Christian Bedard
Andrew Wu
Daisuke Yamagota
Erica Chen
Lei Jin

We were also very pleased to welcome a few extra "Beijing strays" from other years:

Warren Younggren - **Class of 2000**

Peter Luk - **Class of 2001**

Aki Mustonen and Ashley Hankins- **Class of 2003**

Ellen Siu and Katy Wang - **Class of 2004**

Frankie Chin - **Class of 2007**

Serene Wong - **Class of 2008**

Stephanie Zhan - **Class of 2011**



Bujar Kumi and Peter Luk



Bharat Jogi and Mick Green with friends and admirers

Seoul Food & Fun

The first official ISB alumni event for Korea was held in Seoul on the evening of November 24th, 2012. Forty-five alumni gathered in a private room at a restaurant in the now famous area of Gang Nam (yes--Gang Nam style!). The alumni represented classes going back to the mid 1990's right up to three graduates from 2012. A number of those gathered had either returned to Korea or moved to a new country at the end of Middle School or in the early years of High School. It was wonderful to hear that these alumni felt ISB had been an important part of their formative years and were delighted to be able to reconnect with the school through this event. The interaction between varying age groups was lively and dynamic, and some of our senior alumni, such as Mike Park (our new ISB representative in Korea), Ken Lee and John Kim, made a point of visiting each table and connecting with all age groups.

As the evening progressed the volume of conversation increased and all alumni introduced themselves and talked about their time at ISB, and also what they are doing now. We had people in finance and business, the media, tourism, and stay-at-home parents.

To hear alumni talk about their classes, teachers, friends and experiences was truly amazing, and so much fun. The Korean community is integral to the history of ISB, and it seemed fitting to recognize this contribution through this event.

We would like to especially thank Jennifer Van Gevelt who was key in making this event happen. Jennifer (the mother of Terry, who graduated in 2005) found our venue in Seoul, and helped with all the logistics of the night. We really don't know what we would have done without her support.



Alumni reconnect in a private room, Gang Nam style!



Naryung Kim and Seo Yung Park share a laugh with Chris (far left) and Mick Green in Seoul

Dragon Tracks

Three ISB Women Make Their Mark in the World

There are ISB alumni in many corners of the world. Three inspirational interviews are published here, two with former ISB students (Emma Waller and Amalina Majid), and one with a former staff member and parent, Morven Smith. Our Dragons are making important contributions around the world, and success comes in many different shapes; what these three dynamic women have in common is the courage to take steps on behalf of those who need advocates within their own cultures and societies. We hope you enjoy these amazing stories from Emma, Morven, and Amalina.

Morven Smith: Cooking Up Opportunity in Laos

Our family has fond memories of the time we spent in Beijing and especially at the International School of Beijing. We arrived in China from Australia in 2005 as my husband Greg Smith had been appointed Elementary School Principal. Our children, Justine (grade 11) and Cameron (Grade 8), were excited about this new adventure. The following year I also joined the ISB staff as an elementary EAL teacher. My favorite memories from our years at ISB are the International Days. These special events were a great opportunity to share your own culture, but also to gain an insight into the food and traditions of other cultures. The International Days highlighted the cultural diversity of the ISB community, and the staff, students and parents from over 50 countries made the school a very special place to belong.

After Beijing, my husband and I relocated to Vientiane, the capital city of Laos. Greg accepted a position as Director at Vientiane International School. Justine was already at university in Perth, Australia and Cameron was planning to study at the Beijing Language and Cultural University. I began teaching 3rd grade, but I also had the idea that I wanted to learn more about Lao people and their culture, and as Laos is a developing country, to assist others where I could.

I believe one of the best ways to learn about another culture is through experiencing the local cuisine. I was introduced to a Lao lady called Nook, who is a passionate Lao cook and was very generous in sharing her knowledge and culinary skills. Nook taught me how to eat Khao Niawo- sticky rice, about the ingredients used to make padaek; Lao fish sauce, and how Buddhism is woven into everyday life here in Laos. I feel privileged to have this opportunity to live a little bit of a 'Lao life'. I wanted others to experience this, so I began my first

business venture- Lao Experiences. I feel that this is a way to not only share Lao culture with others, but also to empower local people who have the knowledge and skills but no real opportunity for using these skills to develop a livelihood.

Currently Nook and I are developing Lao Experiences Cooking Course and a very special Fresh Market Tour. We enjoy highlighting the fresh produce available in the city and introducing visitors to traditional Lao cooking methods and tastes. We are planning to create a sustainable business model, so that when I leave Vientiane Nook will have a

business that provides a living for herself and her two sons. As we grow Lao Experiences we are beginning to investigate other unique Lao events and we hope to develop small businesses for other local people we meet.

One of Lao Experiences most exciting events was the arrival of famous Australian celebrity television chef, Luke Nguyen. Luke arrived in Laos in April this year. Through his television show he wanted to demonstrate to his

viewers how to cook Lao style, and to film the beauty of the natural environment. He invited our cooking instructor Nook to travel for 18 days to cook and film throughout the country. Nook is keen to include some of these cooking experiences in our new menus. We are eagerly anticipating the series; 'The Greater Mekong in Laos', which will be shown on Australian television in October 2012.

It has been two years since our family left Beijing and ISB but we still have friends around the world, and I feel this is a very special gift that the International School of Beijing has given our family.

“I feel privileged to have this opportunity to live a little bit of a 'Lao life'. I wanted others to experience this, so I began Lao Experiences. I feel that this is a way to not only share Lao culture with others, but also to empower local people.”
— Morven Smith



Lao Experiences staff members; Nook is at the center.



Oscar Sheridan (foreground) and his father Michael are among the ISB friends who have learned to cook Lao style at Lao Experiences.

Emma Waller: Answering Challenges in Kyrgyzstan

Emma Waller attended ISB from 1994-1997, grades 8-11, at the Lido campus. At the end of 1997 her family moved to Melbourne, where she and her brother Joe finished high school and attended university. Joe is still in Melbourne, raising his family (son Felix, and another baby on the way); Emma has taken off again, this time to Kyrgyzstan. Mick and Chris interviewed her for The Elder Dragon.

Tell us about your memories of ISB and bring us up to date on what you are doing now.



Emma, acclimatizing to the high-mountain desert of Kyrgyzstan.

I met a lot of great people and had many good times at ISB. Memories that stand out include being part of the first girls' soccer team at ISB, the Datong China Studies trip in Year 10, and Ms. Stein's introduction to Edgar Allan Poe. I am still good mates with a number of people I met there, with a special mention to Oliver Aunstrup, who was one of my husband's best men at our wedding a few years back.

At university I first studied politics and economics. I worked in economics research for a while before heading to Sri Lanka to work for UNDP after the 2004 tsunami. I then completed my Masters of Public Health, and have been working in health policy since, mainly in breast and cervical cancer screening programs.

Can you tell us about the work you do in Kyrgyzstan and how you ended up there?

Last Easter my husband, Byron, and I were hiking in the Flinders Ranges in Australia and decided it was time for a change again. Byron found a job with a French NGO here in

Kyrgyzstan, and so we shifted here. We are lucky to be able to move between international development and working at home. I am working for a Danish NGO. My work involves monitoring and evaluation for a large conflict-mitigation and peace-building programme in the South of Kyrgyzstan. I also work on a Central Asia regional migration programme working with 25 local NGOs partners from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia.

Kyrgyzstan is a country very few people have ever heard of, let alone visited or worked in. Can you tell us something about the people, their lifestyles and culture?

I feel pretty lucky to have stumbled across this place – it's an incredibly beautiful mountainous landscape, formed out of where the Tian Shan and the Pamir ranges meet. The nation-states of Central Asia formed just 20-odd years ago with the fall of the Soviet Union and Kyrgyzstan was the only one to pursue a democratic system – which makes it politically an interesting place to be. The population of five and a half million is predominantly Kyrgyz, with a number of minority ethnicities making up about 20% of the population, including Uzbek, Russian, Tajik, Uigjur, Tartar and many more. It's a diverse place, and it's hard to describe the people and lifestyle and culture. The Kyrgyz people are historically mountainous nomadic horsemen, and still today many rural families are seasonally nomadic – taking their herd up to mountainous pastures in the summer where they live in yurts, and back to low-lying pastures and to village-life in the winter. City life in Bishkek can feel modern and glamorous one day, and like a big country town the next.

There have been many influences on who the people are today – the mountains, Turkic, the Silk Road, Islam, the Ferghana valley, Genghis Khan, the Russian Empire and Soviet times, Chinese trade, revolutions, and seasonal migration to Russia. I've always felt that drinking tea is truly universal, and I love the way we do it here – on a tap-shan, drinking from a small bowl, never poured for oneself, sometimes sweetened with home-made jam, and with good conversation.

What have been the most memorable moments of working in Kyrgyzstan?

It's an interesting job, and I get to travel a lot and talk to people. Poor access to water is debilitating both socially and economically here and a lot of our time is spent talking to communities about their water issues and looking at new community-built canals and drinking- water taps. There are many women-headed households here as the migration rates are high, and some of my most memorable moments have been sharing tea with really inspiring women who are holding their families and communities together, while pursuing their entrepreneurial ambitions.

What have been the biggest challenges or frustrations?

Not speaking Russian or Kyrgyz or Uzbek is by far the biggest challenge and frustration I have. It's the biggest barrier to meaningful conversation with someone. I'm appalled I've been here a year and not found the time to study the language properly.

Has this been a life-changing experience for you? If so, how?

Sure – for me, all the places I've lived have had an impact on my view of the world and perspective on life. I have seen here natural environments that I have never seen before. I have found the mountains and the brutality of the winter particularly humbling, and some days I have been genuinely surprised at what people can endure. Maybe it's being up high or something too, but changing weather and climate patterns feel particularly pronounced for people here, and I'd not experienced this uncertainty so acutely before. This is the second post-conflict setting I've worked in, and learning about the cruelty and unfairness of what some people endure in their life has changed me too.

“*I have found the mountains and the brutality of the winter particularly humbling, and some days I have been genuinely surprised at what people can endure.*”
– Emma Waller

Looking back at your time at ISB, what advice would you give high school students before they embark on their university and working lives?

It feels a long time since I was a high-school student. At the time, I really did not know what I wanted to do, and yet I

had this feeling that the decisions I was making at the time were going to determine my entire future. When I reflect back now, I realize that things aren't linear like that and opportunities come up, and I could never have predicted the path my studies and career and life took.

What opportunities or learning experiences could ISB have offered to better prepare you for life after school?

I feel lucky having spent part of my high school in international schools. ISB was a good school, and the multi-cultural environment is pretty special.

Amalina Majad: Transcending the Conflict in Syria

Amalina Majid attended ISB from grade 6 until her graduation in 2004. Her father was posted as the Malaysian ambassador to China during that time. Mick Green interviewed her for The Elder Dragon.

What is the strongest memory (besides me teaching you, of course!) that you have of your time at ISB?

I was in ISB for such a long time, I have so many memories to draw from. I still have many fond memories of the old Lido campus and the 'modulars,' which we used to complain about but then dearly missed when we moved to the new campus. All the China Studies experiences definitely stick out as some of the most exciting times at ISB. I still remember trips to cities around China where we would practice Wushu with the students of the school. I have very clear memories of four-year old kids laughing at us while we tried to imitate their moves. Taking a boat trip down the Yangtze River and experimenting with local Chinese cuisine. Of course, the senior trip to Guilin was filled with picturesque moments out in nature, biking through the beautiful mountains and rice fields. Experiencing this part of China with good friends is definitely a fond memory.



Amalina at the refugee camp in Syria

Can you give us a brief description of what you did after leaving ISB?

After ISB, I attended the University of Nottingham in the UK doing my undergraduate studies in Law for three years, and continued with a one year postgraduate degree in International Law. Following this, I returned to Kuala Lumpur (After 12 years of living abroad) and did an internship with the office there of the UN High Commission on Refugees, after which I obtained a permanent post there.

Can you tell us about your work with UNHCR?

After a three-month internship with the RSD (refugee status determination) unit, I applied and got a position as RSD caseworker with the unit. In my post I conducted interviews with asylum-seekers to determine whether they fall within the refugee definition as enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention, with reference to international refugee law, international human rights law and country of origin information. After three years, I joined the UNHCR Emergency Roster and was deployed for a two-month mission to Shousha camp in the Tunisian desert, 5 km from the Libyan border during the transition of power in Tripoli. I conducted RSD interviews with asylum-seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa who had formerly lived in Libya and had fled to Tunisia to escape the violence.

In January 2012, I resigned from my post in the Kuala Lumpur office and joined the Damascus office as an Associate RSD Officer. In this post, I supervise and mentor RSD caseworkers on how to conduct interviews with asylum seekers as well as provide training and guidance on international refugee and international human rights law issues. In this role, I need to keep abreast of updated news and changes in various asylum-producing countries and their neighbours.



Amalina at home in Malaysia

What have been the most memorable moments of working with UNHCR?

I feel so blessed to have been given this opportunity to work with the UN at such an early start to my career. The experiences I have had with UNHCR, even thus far, have been truly enriching and enlightening. I still remember the very first asylum-seeker I interviewed (a Hazara man from Afghanistan who had faced severe discrimination and persecution at the hands of the Taliban). Not only was I entirely enraptured by his story but completely humbled by the refugee's plight, particularly the fact that the only thing that separated me from this young man sitting in front of me was the political situation in my country. I learned this best when I was interviewing a young man from Iraq who had an almost identical profile and upbringing to mine (he was well-educated, studied law in university and his father was in the government service, posted even to a country I had previously lived in due to my fathers' work).

Also of particular memorable occasion, was my first emergency mission to a refugee camp – Shousha. I had seen pictures of refugee camps before, but nothing really prepares you for seeing it first-hand. We took a daily one-hour car ride from the town of Zarzis through endless desert to reach the Shousha camp, located a mere 5km from the Libyan border. The first time I stood on a desert sand dune overlooking the camp, I choked. Not just because of the sand storms but at the sight of what 5,000 people looked like – across a barren, dry desert horizon. I still remember I was doing my yearly fast for Ramadhan in Shousha camp, half of its inhabitants of which

were also Muslims and fasting that month. There was one particular day when it was 50 degrees Celsius outside and I was struggling to keep my fast as I was so parched from the heat. I was thinking of breaking my fast when I saw a young Somali woman, 8 months pregnant standing out in the sun. I offered her some water but she refused because she was fasting. Not only had she fled one of the most dangerous cities on earth (Mogadishu) and crossed the Sub-Saharan desert to escape the violence in Benghazi and carrying a child in the hot, dry desert, but here she was contently fasting. Needless to say, I did not break my fast that day.

What have been the biggest challenges or frustrations of your work especially as you seem to be now based in Syria?

Considering I currently work in the most media-covered war zone of present times, strangely keeping safe from the conflict has not been my biggest challenge in my work. I am thankful and grateful for my safety thus far and the difficult measures taken by colleagues and friends in the organization to ensure my security at all times.

My greatest frustration is feeling helpless. Not that I am helpless, but that the people around me are in need of help and there is not much I can do to help, or the help that I am giving isn't enough. I have met many people who have asked me about my time in Damascus and how difficult it must be for me. But the real incredible stories come from watching my national colleagues. They risk their lives every day just to come to work and to reach out to refugees and to displaced Syrians. Syrians who are facing the same questions of mortality and security as the people they strive to protect. The strength and bravery they portray on a daily basis truly inspires me.

“*I feel so blessed to have been given this opportunity to work with the UN at such an early start to my career. The experiences I have had with UNHCR, even thus far, have been truly enriching and enlightening.*”
– Amalina Majad

Has this been a life-changing experience for you? If so, how?

Absolutely. I think the biggest change is how much perspective this job has given me. It is easy to get wrapped up in our own problems but being exposed to the persons I have had an opportunity to work for and work with, I have really gained somewhat of an understanding of the 'bigger picture.'

In Syria particularly, I have learnt never again to make wild, generalizing assumptions of conflict and war, no matter how much I think I understand

a particular set of circumstances. Most importantly I re-learned the lesson of questioning all sources of information and so-called knowledge. Although I have utmost respect for true journalism and the endeavor of delivering news from conflict areas, the portrayal of the Syrian conflict in popular media has in my opinion been a far cry from true journalism. I always thought being in the conflict would give me a clearer idea of what is happening on the ground, but to the contrary it has made me more confused. But this is confusion in the good sense – in that I can receive information from all sides of a particular story to understand its true complexities. An unfortunate confusion the popular media have largely ignored and over-simplified.

Can you tell us something about the Syrian people, their lifestyles and culture?

My experience of Syria in these past seven months has been the antitheses of the war-stricken, divided, sectarian portrayal of Syria and the people in the popular media. Damascus City is the most authentic, genuine and sincere city I have ever visited –free from the taints of globalization and so rich in ancient history and culture. I have been so lucky to walk through the ruins of Palmyra, the Old town of Damascus including the Umayyad mosque and Hamiddiyeh souk – along stone pavements dating over a thousand years; the setting and foundations for many of the stories found in the Abrahamic religions today. The Syrian people, just like its city, are some of the most warm, welcoming and hospitable people I have ever met. Even amidst the conflict, the Syrian people have welcomed and cared for me without question. My favorite memories in Damascus so far have been evenings cooking *mashawi* (BBQ), eating a freshly prepared *tabouleh* salad, playing *tawleh* (backgammon) on beautiful mosaic playing boards while smoking an *aargile* water pipe.

Looking back at your time at ISB, what advice would you give high school students before they embark on their university and working lives?

Don't stress so much. The most difficult process isn't in figuring out how to do what you enjoy, its actually figuring out what it is you actually enjoy. Once you figure that out, don't overthink or second guess yourself. Just do the things that you enjoy. This doesn't mean skip class and hang out with your friends. You still need to retain an understanding of reality but life is genuinely too short to waste it on doing something you don't enjoy. Success as I think I am starting to figure out, is just a sense of fulfillment. I get to wake up in the mornings and get excited to go to work. That has to be a good sign.

What opportunities or learning experiences could ISB have offered to better prepare them for life after school?

You never know where you are heading in life while you are still in school, so equipping you with a little bit of everything is an absolute necessity. ISB was always excellent at providing a variety of courses and extra-curricular activities built around team-work, collaboration, leadership which are all essential functional skills required for the workplace. But I did take one important lesson from many of my ISB teachers and particularly from my Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class. If there is one message every student should take from a good teacher, it is learning HOW to think and not WHAT to think.



The Alumni Association Welcomes the Class of 2012

Rafael Enrico Sison Baculinao
Seo Hyun Bae
Ria Bahl
Oliver Adam Molskov Bech
Sarah Elizabeth Beckley
Francesca Charlotte Bottorff
Peter William Yeh Brown
Michelle Ann Bulterys
Tyler Scott Canterbury
Kai-Sheng Chang
Emily Joanne Chang
Pei-Jan Chang
Maryanne Su Jan Cheah
Kailene Yin Jen Chen
Kunihiko (Pangyen) Chen
Cullen Titus Chen
Shi Samson Chen
Ho Kiu Cheng
Joey Chun-Yi Cheung
Abhinav Chhabra
Chloe Pui Yeng Chia
Jonathan Carey Chin
Tsz Mei Chiu
Sun Woo Choi
Austin Patrick Christie
Maura Cathrine Dentino
Jia Cheng Fan
Henry Ching Fong
Cameron Alistair Frayne
Seth Bradley Gammons
Xiao Wen Gong
Brandon Zitai Guo
DongHyeok Han
Margaret Andrea Hardiman
Emily Devin Harwitz
Madison A Hockaday
Horace Hexi Hou
Crystal F. Hsu
Alexander Nixon Huang
Peter Tairan Wang Huang
Phillip Yiran Wang Huang
Vincent Chun Kit Huang
Christopher Tien-Wei Hwa

Lyes Mauni Jalali-Yazdi
Da Eun Jeong
Shan Shan Jiang
Bradley Neil Johanson
Chan Ah Jung
He Ra Kang
Yeon-Kyoung Kim
Soo Min Kim
Hae Joo Kim
SungJong Kim
Krystal Miao Lin Koh
Jennifer Kuo
Hirosei Kuruma
Wesley Zhi-Wen Kwok
Yu Shing Maximilian Lai
Ching Daphne Lam
Matthew Dung-Yan Law
Von Ying Lee
Robert Yuan Bwo Lee
Meong Sun Lee
Won Kyu Lee
Joon Young Lee
Da Sol Lee
Min Ho Lee
Jiaheng Li
Boxuan Li
Arleen Wei Li
Hsuan Wen Lin
Sean Tse-Yen Lin
Joanna Liu
Daniel Z Liu
Andrew Matthew Guang Zong
Liu
Victor Ming Wang Liu
Christopher Phillips Liu
Victor Jiaqi Liu
Yew Shang Loh
Weifan Lu
Chun Kin Lui
Hoi Fung Ma
Kevin Yubin Ma
Lesedi Charlotte Maluleke
Matthew Daniel Martindale



Jocelyn Hei Yin Ng
Kai Ho Ng
Ryan Christopher Noble
Thea Johanna Nygren
Petter Olafsen
Gi Cheol Joshua On
So Yeon Park
Seong Ju Park
Isabel Wilhelmina-Abadie
Perrin
Aaron Alexander Pu
Evan Saura Ramsey
Shavonne Ravlich
Michael Ren
Chris Ren
Ciera Nicole Rife
Grace Kathleen Ayres
Robertson
Amanda Elizabeth Robison
Stephen Ross Rogers
Britain Avalon Ross
Riowena Suyu Seah
Stephen Tsung-Han Sher
Charles Yi Si
Liam Singh Sohi
Jesse Lev Starger
Kevin Chuhen Su
Kathleen Marie Summers

Xiao Yi Sun
Sean Sijin Tan
Jaslyn Teo
Teresa Mario Ci En Teo
Charles Brigham Toronto
Sarah Joan Tsai
Partel Unga
Gian Marco Junan Valentino
Quang-khai Jacques Van Anh
TJ Walton
Yu Shuai Jerry Wang
Kevin Feng Wang
Yumeng Wang
William Weilian Wang
Lindsay Wang
Marcus Chun On Wei
Brett Matthew Whitney
Carl Wollter
John Joseph Kwong Ho Wong
Jonathan Kwan Ho Wong
Angela Tiffany Bolam Wong
Ngai Yan Wong
John Farley Wong
Jeremiah James Wong
Charmaine Hiu Wai Wong
Hong Yue Woo
Simon Wu
Brendan Zhixiang Wu
Nien Ying Wu
Alan Geryuan Wu
William Weiqiao Jr. Wu
Michael Xinwu Xie
Pamela Wang Yan
Henry Yau
Jeffrey YuiHim Yau
Gilbert Xiang Ye
Valerie Wei Yen Yeung
Katarina Lyudmila Young
Daisy Yu
Shang-Wen Yu
Richard Muolong Zhang
Chi Zhang
Sophie Jing Wei Zhang
Emily Zhang
Janita Tian Yu Zhang
Kevin Thomas Zhang
Jane Kun Zhou
Nicole Leigh Zhu
Diane Hui Zhu
Pu Nuo Zhu



High School Principal Dr. Paul Wood cuts the cake with members of the graduating class.

Next Steps for Newest Alumni

Graduates from the Class of 2012 have matriculated at the following colleges and universities. The list does not reflect matriculations for students who opted for an alternative year, who are performing national service in their home countries, or who will be beginning their studies in the Southern Hemisphere in 2013.

Albion College
Barnard College
Bentley University
Berklee College of Music (2)
Boston University
Brigham Young University (3)
Brigham Young University, Idaho
Brown University
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (2)
Carnegie Mellon University (3)
College of William and Mary
Connecticut College
Cornell University
Drexel University (2)
Elmira College
Emory University (2)
Ewha Womans University
Georgia Institute of Technology (2)
Hawaii Pacific University
Imperial College of Science, Technology, and Medicine
Ithaca College
Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
Korea University
Maryland Institute College of Art
McMaster University
National University of Singapore
New York University (6)
Northeastern University (3)
Northwestern University (4)
Pennsylvania State University, University Park (2)
Queen's University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey at New Brunswick (2)
Savannah College of Art and Design Hong Kong
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
School of the Art Institute of Chicago (4)



Sweet Briar College
Texas A&M University
The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology
Tsinghua University
Tufts University (3)
University College London (3)
University of Aberdeen
University of Bath
University of British Columbia (2)
University of California at Berkeley (5)
University of California at Irvine
University of California at Los Angeles (7)
University of California at San Diego (6)
University of California at Santa Cruz (2)
University of Cambridge
University of Chicago (4)
University of Glasgow
University of Hong Kong (3)
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (3)
University of Kent
University of Manchester
University of Massachusetts, Lowell
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Duluth
University of Notre Dame
University of Nottingham
University of Pennsylvania (2)
University of Redlands (2)
University of Rochester
University of South Carolina
University of Southern California (12)
University of Toronto (8)
University of Washington (5)
Utah State University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Washington University in St. Louis (2)
Weber State University



ISB Memory Wall

In a transient community such as our own, much of what has gone before becomes swiftly inaccessible. People move on—to new postings, to university—and the memories are difficult to recapture. Thus, just in time for the school's 30th anniversary, the ISB Memory Wall was unveiled. Set out in three columns, each representing a decade of school history, the wall captures some of the most meaningful moments in our past.

The wall is not static: All of the photos, news clippings, and stories that are posted now can be exchanged for other interesting artifacts, so that we have a dynamic portrait of our past. If you have photos or documents that you think we should showcase on the Memory Wall, be sure to send an email to one of the Alumni Coordinators to let us know.



You Say Alumnus, I Say Alumna...

The ISB Alumni Association is a group of former students and staff of our school. Altogether, we are the **alumni**. One of us is—what?

The easiest correct answer is this: one of us is “an alum.”

Using the proper terminology (alumnus, alumna, alumni, alumnae) requires learning a small bit of word history.

Alumnus/alumna – these words in English reflect the gender distinction of their Latin roots. An **alumnus** is the masculine form of the noun, referring to a male former student or staff member; an **alumna** is the feminine form of the noun, and means a female former student or staff member.

Further confusing the situation for alumni of ISB and schools elsewhere is the standardized (and politically charged) preference for the masculine form of the noun in the plural. A female ISB graduate is an **alumna**; she and her female classmates are **alumnae** (plural of alumna). A boy graduate is an **alumnus**; he and his male classmates are **alumni**. The class as a whole, however, both boys and girls, are **alumni**.

Frankly, all of this may seem a bit arcane, unless you love word roots. And so, if you like, call yourself an alumnus, an alumna, or shorten it to “alum.”

The important thing is that you call yourself a **Dragon**—and stay in touch!

Staying Connected with ISB

If you have received this newsletter, then we have your correct email address. This newsletter is published electronically, so please pass it on to other alumni you are in contact with.

If an ISB friend has passed you this information, please make sure to join the Alumni Association!

Here's what to tell us:

- Your name, current email address, and current mailing address
- Your status at ISB--e.g. student, graduate, parent, staff member
- The years you were at ISB? e.g. 1999-2005
- If you are a student, where you are studying and what degree or major you are pursuing
- If you are working, where you work, what your job title and responsibilities are

Here's where to send your information:

Send a message via the Alumni-International School of Beijing Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/AlumniISB>

Visit the Alumni page of the ISB Website-- this appears under the "Community" drop-down tab (www.isb.bj.edu.cn/community/Alumni/Pages/default.aspx)

Send an email to any of our three Alumni Coordinators:

Chris Green (cgreen@isb.bj.edu.cn),

Mick Green (mgreen@isb.bj.edu.cn) or

Mel Ker (alumni@isb.bj.edu.cn)

As a world leader in international education, it is the mission of ISB, in partnership with parents, to educate and inspire our students to reach their unique potential and contribute positively to society by providing a world class education that is enriched by our diversity and the Chinese culture in which we live.



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