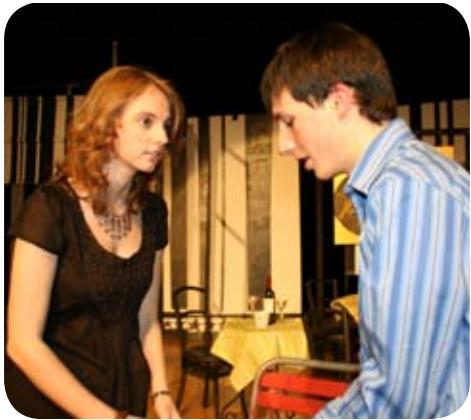


The Riverside Community News



SPRING / SUMMER 2007-2008

The Riverside School | Artherstrasse 55 | CH-6300 Zug, Switzerland | www.riverside.ch



S STARS AND STRIPES

Following last year's production of Neil Simon's farce 'Rumours', Riverside students decided to change track again and write their own musical. Friday 14th March saw the debut of Riverside students at Zug Casino, the largest venue used yet, with their spectacular, original musical, 'Stars and Stripes'. The cast of 30 performed to a packed audience of 300, which included the Mayor of Hünenberg and journalist Miriam Scherrer from the Neue Zuger Zeitung.

The production was a brave and ambitious project by the students: they wrote the script themselves and each student in the Drama 4 class took responsibility for the development of their own character together with one of the scenes. The singers largely chose their own songs and all the dances were choreographed by the students themselves. The students' satisfaction at the end was summed up by Andrew Stylianou, pictured above with Charlotte Lübker: "The fact that we wrote it and saw it through from beginning to end; and that we progressed so far meant a lot to me. It was well worth everything we went through to get there." A further remarkable aspect of the performance was that all the music in the show was provided by our very own musicians.

What next year will bring will be inevitably different, but plans are already underway for next year's production. Watch out for news of it on our new website which launches in August:

www.iszl.ch

International School of Zug and Luzern
Riverside Campus

FROM THE DIRECTOR, DOMINIC CURREN

Dear Riverside Alumni,

It has been a strange, hectic, energising and draining year in so many ways and for so many members of our community. Word is out there about the quality of our school and applications stand at an unprecedented level. Of course, this has created a difficult situation for us. How do we stay a small school and limit numbers, but also serve the needs of a growing community with students needing places? With this in mind, the Board has had a tough decision to make. I am pleased to report that it has opted to open the doors, expand and send the Riverside message to increasing numbers of students. To these ends we grew this year to over 180 students and next year will grow to over 200.

This, of course, brings a number of challenges. How do we maintain an intimate knowledge of our students? How do we ensure a familiar, caring environment? How do we keep the teacher-student relationships as good as they have always been? How do we find the space? Challenges indeed, but there are solutions, and these can be found (as they always could), in the quality of staff and students at the school: their commitment to discussion and inclusion; their involvement in school life; and their enthusiasm for learning.

Our merger with ISOZ and ISOL is a fantastic opportunity to create one Pre-School through Grade 12 school for the international community of Central Switzerland. Curriculum planning, administration, finance, facilities, and an abundance of other tasks are bound to keep us busy, but provide a wealth of opportunities for improvement and extension of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for our students. Our name, of course, changes to the International School of Zug and Luzern – unsurprising in many ways as it describes what we are! However, there is a clear need to recognise the history of our school so the high school campus will always be known as the "Riverside" campus. I am delighted to report that the new location for our school (in three years time) is next to a stream. Hardly a river, but perhaps better than a lake!

The new school will be built in Hünenberg on a 17,000 square metre site. We will have a triple gymnasium, full size sports field, custom designed classrooms, and a theatre. I am delighted that this will provide up to 400 high school students with an opportunity to benefit from the message of respect which has underpinned our community since the school was founded. I am equally delighted that Mr Zemo has agreed to give our graduation speech, in this transitional year, to complete a Riverside circle which he was so instrumental in starting 18 years ago.

For now, I wish you a great summer, and invite you all to come back and see us whenever you have the opportunity.

Sincerely,
Dominic Curren



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GOODBYE TO...



Abraham
Delos Reyos



Collette
Donck



Susanne
Huber

Abraham Delos Reyos returns to Singapore where his wife is expecting the birth of their second child, a baby girl.

Collette Donck moves to Brussels in Belgium where she will be working in an office.

Laura Richter is on maternity leave after the birth of Tamryn on the 29th May.



Laura
Richter



NANCY
TRAINOR
Head of Learning
Support 1993 - 2008

Earlier this academic year, Riverside said good-bye to Nancy Trainor who gracefully retired. In March, Adeline Lordet organised a special leaving party where many ex-students and parents were there to wish her well. It gave all of us the opportunity to thank her for her dedication.

Nancy is leaving Switzerland this summer and will be living in Cape Cod in the USA.



Philip
Pflugbeil

"This past year was full of PDWs to Space Camp Turkey and Lake Garda in Italy; full of sports coaching sr. football and skiing; and full of rambunctious and energetic teenagers teaching English and Humanities to MYP 1-3. Next year, I will be taking the year off teaching and will be working on my Master's degree in International Education. I will be attending classes in Madrid this summer and next; however, I will be living in Zug for the school year while working on courses on-line. While I am studying, I would love to keep in touch with students and help them further with their studies during the next school year. If there is any need for a Humanities or English Tutor, please email me at ppflugbeil@hotmail.com.

SOPHIE GAVARD



The Riverside adventure started for me 18 years ago, in 1990, when Mr. Zemo, the first director and founder of the Riverside School, told me that he was opening a new school and asked me if I wanted to join the faculty. His vision of a school where teachers and students would have an equal say in the decision-making process involving all aspects of school life, around the idea of respect, suited my own educational beliefs, and it was indeed an exceptional experience.

Riverside was like an extended family where the difference between teachers and students tended to disappear. I can say that, during these 18 years of teaching, I have truly learnt at least as much from my students as I have taught them; they shared with me their life experience, which was different from mine; they shared their favorite books, music and hobbies with me, they also helped me recognize my limitations and question some of my beliefs. They have helped me grow, too.

I remember the beginning years of the Riverside School as a passionate time, where nobody counted the hours spent at school because we had all chosen to be there, students and faculty alike. There was room for everyone to make mistakes, and the school provided a secure frame for being able to learn from these mistakes and to become more responsible. The whole Riverside staff shared the same vision and the same ideology. Academics were certainly important, but equally important were individual qualities, artistic talent, human values. Everyone could grow and evolve at his or her own pace, and experienced freedom by living it.

As nothing in life is static, the Riverside School has changed over the years, a bit like a child full of promises who evolved and moved on, adapting to different situations and unpredictable changes. It has grown tremendously, has moved to its third campus, which is no more by a river but by a lake, and is looking to build its own campus in a new location. Moreover, Mr. Currer is its third director, and most of the initial faculty has gone or has retired. And, last but not least, it is merging with the International School of Zug and Luzern, and it will change its

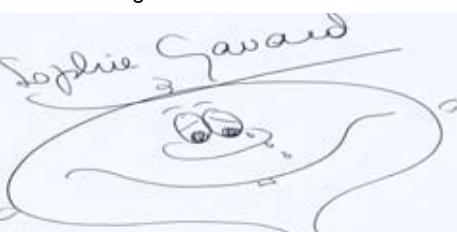
AUGIE ZEMO - Riverside's founding Director 1990 - 1998

name next year, a bit like a young woman who gets married and no longer uses her maiden name. A lot of changes, in a relatively short time span. Exciting for some people, scary for others. But change is the essence of life and the end of something is always the beginning of something else!

It is not easy for me to leave, especially as I have been very happy here for most of my 18 years of teaching. The school even became my family during difficult times of my life when the whole Riverside community supported me. There are so many memories, so many faces, so many special moments. There would be enough material there for a book, so I won't even start here! Except for one: last year, during a French AP class, my student Max Van Aubel pointed out to me: "Gavard, you have actually been in school all your life! Wouldn't it be time to try something else?" This really made me think. He had a point. I had never left school as I started teaching officially at the age of 19, but was already giving private lessons when I was still a high-school student. So the message was clearly "Hey Gavard, time to grow up and leave the reassuring cocoon of the school world." Thanks Max! You see what I meant earlier when I was writing about students teaching their teachers?

I started to study dance therapy in January 2007 at the IAC in Zürich. It is a tough, but fascinating course, and it opened new perspectives to me during my first year there. Next year, I have to write a dissertation (in German... HELP!), which will take most of my time, so I decided to turn another page of the book of my life and try my luck in a different field. Of course, I could have remained a teacher all my life. I still enjoy teaching and probably always will. It is part of my identity. However, I feel that something else is calling me, even though I have no precise idea of which shape my future will take. But I know one thing: if I don't try it now, I will never do it, and for me the timing is right.

So I will also graduate from Riverside on the 21st of June 2008, and join the Alumni group! I would like to thank all my students and all my colleagues for everything they have brought me during all these years. I do not want to mention any more names, because I would really have to name every person I have worked with in these 18 years and who have all been a source of inspiration of some kind. I will miss you all, especially my students!
Love and hugs



P.S: If you want to contact me, my new Email address is gavard.sophie@gmail.com

The new school was the idea of Fowler Stillman, Bev Meyer, and me (Augie Zemo). We had several meetings working out the framework before we approached the others - Ian Deleay, Don Kinibburgh, and Ken McKinley - asking them to join us. All of the basic philosophy and its implications in other details of the school were worked out by those three. A few modifications were made when we asked the others to join, but we were insistent that the basic tenets could not be changed. (Late in the year before the school was to open, Ken had to withdraw because of a family situation that necessitated his moving to London. Steve Loesche was his replacement.)

I created the school rule which was, "Show respect to yourself, to those around you, and to the communities to which you belong." I felt that environmental issues were implicit in the rule. The other concept was that infringements of the rule would not result in an automatic punishment. Rather, we viewed each violation as an opportunity for counseling.

Critical to the philosophy of the school was that the spirit of a community be honored in all ways. Thus, decisions were never made from on high, but only after open discussion with the faculty. Before any decisions that affected students could be implemented, the students, in an assembly, could express their views about the proposed change. Similarly, students could bring any suggestions or observations to the faculty and present them at a faculty meeting. Also fundamental to the school was that the board should not be elected by parents, but be self-perpetuating - with the primary criterion for membership being an evinced commitment to and/or involvement with education. The educational ideals were modeled on Sizer's (with the exception of his stating that foreign language study was not essential), key to which was the use of portfolios for assessment, which in turn allowed students to demonstrate their competency in a subject area whenever they felt ready to. This approach, in turn, allowed a student to advance at his/her own pace and not be obliged to take two, three, or four years of study to meet a graduation requirement.

We wanted ideally to have all subject areas integrated so that a student could understand their interrelationships. This goal was never achieved for a host of reasons, though in the first years English and history were fully integrated and a few teachers, like Fowler and Chris Hummel, did try to contribute to the integrated studies course at whenever infrequent times their other commitments and the time-table permitted.

We also believed that given Riverside's philosophy, teacher loads should be limited to four courses so that teachers had time to work one-on-one with students either when they had problems or wished to accelerate. To this end, all teachers' offices (there was no faculty room) were to be open to students throughout the school day. At first, a few teachers were hesitant about always having their doors open, but this principle soon came to be accepted.

In addition, a number of students participated with local community sports clubs or created individual physical activities. There were track, cross-country, basketball, soccer, skiing, swimming, volleyball etc.

We had several names for the school, but, as we ran them by the school lawyer, we discovered that all of them were too close to the names of existing entities to be likely to be accepted by the registry of commerce. My best recollection was that Ian was indeed the one who came up with the name of "Riverside" once I had found the location for the first site for the school.

DAVID BROOKS Director 1998 - 2005

It has been nearly three years since Jane and I left Riverside and we have kept in touch and followed the progress the school has made. We are delighted with the amalgamation of the three schools and are full of confidence that the 'new' school will be a huge success. One of the challenges of a larger school will be in maintaining the uniqueness of Riverside. I believe that Riverside's strength was in the individual approach it took to each student's education. The student was always the focus of the school. Student welfare was a permanent item on our staff meeting agendas, and plenty of opportunity was given our students to have input into a decision making process. The school was small and personal and we were able to take the time to maintain this personal approach.

However, even in those early days of Riverside, as we grew it became more and more challenging to meet the individual needs of our students. Meeting the needs of 100 individual timetables may not be twice as challenging, but certainly presented more difficulties. Small Group Meetings were certainly much easier and more frequent when there were 60 students in the school than when we had over 100. So, clearly, things gradually began to change as we grew and matured as an institution. We continued to hold on to the essence of the Riverside philosophy, but recognised the inevitability of change – and indeed welcomed it.

I think the recent changes in curriculum and the merger are naturally progressive moves in the successful story of our school. Greater numbers in the junior school will soon lead to a larger and stronger senior school and this in time will mean a richer curriculum, broader co-curricular choices and a wide social mix. The I.B. Diploma Programme will certainly enhance Riverside's tradition of graduates entering the universities of their choice. The essence of the Riverside experience will surely remain intact, but the opportunities for Riverside students will certainly be enhanced.

Riverside will always hold a very special place in our hearts and very fond memories. We feel, like so many Riverside graduates, that it is a place to which we will return and always feel welcome.



SOPHIE JOHN née (ROTNIEMER BENKER 1998)

"After Riverside, I went to university for a while, then decided that travelling and going with the flow was the best option. I've lived in many countries and continents, taught English in Slovakia and worked in night clubs in Australia where I met David. After only five days we just *knew* and both wrote that in each other's travel book. I went back to Paris and stayed in touch through payphones, having seven hour long conversations every two or three days. A few months later I moved to London, where David's from, and we've been together ever since. He proposed on our year and a half anniversary, we were married nine months later. We have been together for nearly three years. He's a head-hunter and I'm in investment banking."

TIFFANY ESTES (2007) WITH BARACK OBAMA

Early in the Democratic Presidential campaign trail, Tiffany Estes met Barack Obama. She says: "Meeting him was absolutely a thrill because he seems very charismatic and really interested in the individual person. He asked me what college was like and how my classes were going. This was a week or two before exams so of course I said 'right now a little stressful because exams are coming.' He said 'Yeah, I hear you on this one.' After he gave his speech to Wartburg College my dad and I quickly went up to say good bye to him and he wished me "good luck on your math" which showed he remembered! How cool is that?! I mean how many candidates would have remembered with all that was going on?! A lot of students on campus here like him very much and support him. They feel he is charismatic. When he gave his speech he told us what his plans are if he were president. He said in meetings regarding certain topics he wants ordinary citizens to have a chair at the meeting so they can participate and have a say in what will happen to certain topics. I thought this is an excellent idea because it shows that he cares what ordinary people believe and want. He is open minded. I like that about him. He was very humorous and made the audience laugh several times. He even answered a 12 year old boy's question which had the word stuff in it. Obama, when answering the question, also used that word which means he could make the 12 year old boy relate to him better."

We're sure Tiffany will be watching the elections in November carefully!

NEWS IN BRIEF FROM RIVERSIDE ALUMNI

Anne Stillman: Riverside Graduate 1994

Anne successfully submitted her PhD in English literature late last year and was promptly appointed a fellow and tutor at Clare College, University of Cambridge. Dr. Fred Parker (in whom we shared a Director of Studies) writes that it's "wonderful, principally for the students".
Elisabeth Marksteiner (Clare College 1985-1988)

Elvira Soljić: Riverside Graduate 1999

Elvira is finishing her PhD in Economics at the University of Warwick this summer. She's already been appointed to an assistant professorship at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. She says it will be "a big change after nine years in the UK."

Slávka Mueller: Riverside Graduate 2003

Having successfully completed her PGCE at the University of Exeter, Slávka will join our faculty at our primary campus in Zug.