



The International
School of Belgrade
Since 1948

Coming Far From Many Nations...

ISB Alumni Newsletter



Director's Foreword

Dear Alumni,

As the new Director of ISB it is a pleasure for me to write this foreword to the Alumni Newsletter. I joined the school this past summer and I have spent the time listening, observing and learning. One thing I know for sure: this is a great school with much to celebrate.

One of our goals this year is to spread the word about ISB in the local community. ISB is undoubtedly the best international school in Belgrade, but sometimes it feels a bit like 'the best kept secret'.

Which leads me to a request for your help. You are the true success stories of our school, and we love to share these with our community. Please could I ask you to keep in touch and let us now what you are doing. Tell us about your successes, your family, where you live, study and work now. We really want to hear from you.

The added bonus for me personally, is that it will give me a chance, as the new kid on the block, to get to know you.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you are ever in Belgrade again, please come and visit us.

With kind regards

Andrew

Alumni Visits

Wow, what memories for both us! We would like to thank you and the staff who escorted us during our stay in Belgrade in September, 2019. It's been nearly 30 years ago when we left, while many things have certainly changed, some haven't.



First, a little background. We lived in Belgrade from January 1989 until June 1991. I served three years on the ISB Board, and Judy, my wife, was a full time substitute teacher our last year in Belgrade. I worked at the airport as Boeing's representative in support of Yugoslav Air Transport. Our two boys, Greg and Nick, began their ISB education in 2nd and 5th grade.

Our three years in Belgrade were probably the most memorable times of our lives. The Berlin Wall fell, Ukraine became independent, and the conflict within Yugoslavia was escalating daily. One personal highlight was our family trip into a new Ukraine, from Belgrade, through Hungary, and to Lviv, where I visited relatives, uncles and cousins I had never met.

Now to our impressions of ISB after so many years. The first change was the strict security now in place for visitors. ISB, 30 years ago, was quite open, and anyone could walk in.

Next was the extent and depth of computerization throughout the campus. Computers were just beginning to be used back then, mostly in the school's offices. Now, we saw many kids attentive to their screens. Thankfully, we didn't see video games being played.

Then the bright colors. Everything now seems to be color coded. The buildings, the rooms, the grounds,..Back then, everything looked a little drab, a little socialist looking, but this created a certain historical, almost archeological appeal to the surroundings.



I sense an attempt to escape the past with paint. Just a little nostalgia comment of mine.

The new buildings appeared to be very nicely laid out, and happily used. We especially liked the new gym, and the climbing wall. Back then, the kids had no gym, and had to go outside onto the basketball court. Wintertime and inclement weather is no fun for kids trying to play. Thankfully, they no longer have to endure this.

Next, and very important, are the kids we met. They are same the eager, attentive junior adults we remember from 30 years ago. We like the fact that Serbian children are now allowed to attend. Back then, the enrollment averaged around 160, or 1/2 of what you have today. Most kids then came from diplomatic families.

And now the most important item, is the absolute love and concern for children we sensed from the teaching staff. This existed 30 years ago, and is in place today. There is something beyond description, beyond words, that is in place within an ISB teacher, either local born or foreign. This was in place back then, and it is in place now. A special calling or motive within the heart of each teacher.

To develop young diverse minds, born of world-wide parents, and instill in them a common thirst for knowledge is an immense undertaking. Providing a solid education for them, based on good values and morals, is a mighty challenge. The teachers and staff of ISB are handling this goal well, very well.

Thank you so much for the tour.

Jerry Lisewych





Memories of ISB Through the Years

by Carmen Bollhorn

Last December the journalism students invited the former students and teachers to share their experiences at ISB. The students sent emails all over the world and more than 20 former students and teachers responded. They have picked some quotes from these emails that best represent ISB for its 70th birthday. Carmen Bollhorn, our grade 8 student, took a challenge of writing this extensive article and bring back the memories of different teachers and students that will always be a part of the ISB family.

Maria Eugenia was a student at ISB as a 7th grader in 1977 and left in 1980, when it was a modest little school 'High School was 12 students at it was the most crowded'. She also said, 'Our seventh grade class was fairly small' and 'I have the best memories of those years' She enjoyed the school song that they sang, 'my experience of ISB can be summed up in that song more than in any other way' and is sad we no longer sing it. Draginja Jetic who taught at ISB in 1987 till 2012 said, 'ISB becomes a second home to both the staff and the students'. Lekisha Jackson who was a Middle school teacher from 2008 till 2010 said, 'The students were just lovely and so much fun to teach; we had a great time'. Through the years as ISB has grown, it is still a family, home to its staff and students. Our memories reach back to 1948. So much has changed, but we still have the same love and fun at this school as we did 70 years ago.





Here are some more quotes from all those wonderful people who were living and sharing their lives here at ISB:

“I have so many wonderful memories of ISB from the MATHCOUNTS competition to teacher trainings to the 8th grade trip, but most of my favorite memories come from the time that I spent with my students in my classroom. The students were just lovely and so much fun to teach; we had a great time.”
Lekisha Jackson, I was at ISB from 2008-2010, 2 years.

“Over the 47 years that I taught at ISB, I was in the Middle School primarily as an English language arts/literature teacher and as a visual arts teacher. However, at various times into that schedule snuck ESL, 8th grade history, P.E., and 2nd grade reading. I loved the Young Authors’ Competition, the Middle School Cultural Arts Festivals, and especially the Write Now, Right Now poetry anthologies which we created. I am filled with gratitude for all that Serbia, and ISB in particular, have given to me.”
Anne Jovovic long term teacher, from 1970

“ISB was like a family in those days. The teachers worked closely, like a team. I have very fond memories of the students, their families and my friend’s the retired Staff. We still meet for coffee every week.”
Jasmina Obradovic-Perisic long term teacher from 1976 to 2004

“The time I spent at ISB was by far the best time of my years at school and university. The teachers were incredible, the lesson plans were always so well thought out, and my friends were absolutely wonderful. I learned so much at ISB and will forever be grateful to my teachers and friends for what they taught me and for the lasting friendships I made there. I hope to meet Mrs Jovovic in the Washington DC area over the upcoming holidays and I’m sure we will have plenty to reminisce about. My family actually lived in Smederevo, where my father was working at the time. Our house was on a hill overlooking the Danube, and I remember it being incredibly beautiful. The people we encountered in Smederevo were extremely warm, kind, and welcoming. I remember they were curious about India, its history, food, and music and would ask us many questions about life back home. We learned Serbian quite quickly, so we were able to communicate fairly easily. Yugoslavia was experiencing severe hyperinflation with shortages of supplies back then , so it wasn’t the best of times for the economy. But our neighbors were very resilient and got on with their daily lives with amazing fortitude.”
Malhar Nabar (student), I joined in March 1987.

“During the time, technology made huge strides at ISB. We got many new computers in both the lab and classrooms, improved the internet, got SmartBoards, and even a few projectors. Teachers began to feel more comfortable using technology with their students and in general instruction. I loved working with such wonderful colleagues, some of which I remain in contact. I enjoyed exploring Serbia and Eastern Europe with them. I loved the homey feel of the campus, particularly the main villa with the fireplace in the library. Having students from so many different countries also made the school special. For Christmas, the performances were very special and involved a wide community.”
Melissa Enderle (now in China)



We had a Field Day for all the students. Everyone participated and it was a lot of fun.

We also had a Bazaar where most of the Embassies that had children at our school (there were 38 different countries) had booths selling their products or the food from their countries. Most popular booth was the Marine booth selling hot dogs. Teachers did "old clothes".

That also was popular;

Field trips were taken regularly. Each class had two trips a year. We went to monasteries, old towns, Nikola Tesla birth place, Kovacica, Oplenac, Novi Sad castle. I remember the friendship I made there and the excellent students. I have both the students and teachers on my Facebook now.

I was there when it was still Yugoslavia. It was easier to travel through the country. You could go from Slovenia to Macedonia without being stopped for your passport check.

On United Nations Day every child that had a costume from their country wore it and we had a parade on the playground. Parents came and brought food from their country in the classroom of their child and that was our lunch. I loved tasting different foods.

We as teachers were also invited to the Embassies when they celebrated their Independence Day where we met different people than the school. Very educational for us.

The best memory that I have is the visits from our Pittsford School which was our sister school in USA. Once a year a teacher or administrator came to Belgrade and two of us went to Pittsford schools.

We visited their classrooms and had a board presentation of our school. We were introduced to new ideas and materials."

Lily Tomcak long term teacher, I was there as a 4th grade teacher from 1971-1990.

"When I was at ISB there was only one campus. There were 3 buildings at that time, the main villa, the upper and lower classroom buildings.

The school, teachers and classes had an air of enthusiasm and positivity. Smiles crossed the many faces and children learned and shared in learning together.

A highlight of my time at ISB was being a part of wonderful staff that laughed, learned and shared together. They took my wife and me in, shared the magic of ISB and made our time teaching at ISB wonderful. What amazing people we worked with.

Another highlight was the school trip to Palic for the weekend. It was a great bonding trip!

Serbia was a part of Yugoslavia at the time I was at ISB. Belgrade was a bustling city that was filled with so many things to see and do, but there were many challenges like poverty among the local residents and the evolving crisis in Kosovo. We enjoyed exploring the wonderful city of Belgrade.

In addition, my wife and I evacuated to Budapest, Hungary, during the tense times leading up to the Kosovo conflict. While in Budapest we worked to set up a temporary school in a hotel to give students an opportunity to keep learning. An adventure it was.

ISB holds a special place heart. While I taught there I also learned about the wonderful world of an international school!"

Chris and Diana Pratt (now in Pittsford, NY), My wife, Diana, and I were teachers at ISB for a bit less than two years. We began in teaching in September, 1997 and left in March of 1999, a few days before the NATO bombing campaign.

"Getting bottle of Johnny Walker in a brown bag from the Zambian ambassador, the stack of military



hats at functions, making kayaks out of packing materials from embassies and testing them in the Adriatic. being part of a cox 8 rowing team on the Sava and Danube River. Skiing in Kosovo at Bresovica and being able to find my size 52 shoe size easily in Montenegro.

We taught in Yugoslavia, it had the best passport and we had a lichna karta to travel in Eastern Europe. We walked or biked to school every day from Topcider.”

Bernie and Jodie Welch (now in Maine), I was at ISB from 88 – 90

“When I first came to ISB in 1982, there was just the lower campus. Friendship Hall was built during that time. There was nothing below Friendship Hall. The campus had much more flora then....

For me, the sanctions made an indelible impression on me. We all had to band together even more than before, having only 10 students, and missing quite a lot of our regular teachers. We made sure those kids really got what they deserved, and the sense of family that ISB had back then and up to that time was exemplary. Sad to say that now that ISB is so big, I am not sure that is still true.”

Pat Andjelkovic long term teacher, I was there as a teacher twice, once from 1982-84, then 1989 to 2011.

“My ties with ISB were from my early childhood, as my mother Gordana Obradović, was the first ISB teacher, where she worked until her retirement. So when ISB decided to introduce Computer Literacy in its curriculum, I was offered a part-time job.

ISB had a special role in my life, as I practically grew up with it. When I was a small boy, we lived in Sanje Živanovića, and the school was about 5 minutes from my home. I never attended ISB as a student, but I often went there to play with other kids who were. I still remember many of the former ISB staff and directors from mid-fifties until the beginning of the 21st century. Many of them became close friends of my parents, and came often to our home.

As a teacher, I joined ISB after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The hardest times were in the spring of 1999, during the NATO intervention, when the majority of students and their families left Belgrade, but the then-principal Dr. Nikola Kodžas decided that we keep the school open. At that time I was living near Slavija circle, in the city center, and I used to go to school by bicycle, as there was a shortage of petrol. The teaching staff was also reduced, so I took over teaching Science for a short period for the few students that remained in the school.”

Ivan Obradovic (son of Gordana Obradovic) long term teacher, I was a part-time teacher at ISB from 1995 to 2004, teaching Computer Literacy, and Science

“I can still remember the crowded ESL classroom full of students eagerly awaiting the lunch time guest speaker presentations which I organized in order to develop cultural awareness at ISB; parents so graciously devoted their precious time to sharing cultural highlights of their countries with our students. What a rich, cultural experience for our students. In a nutshell, ISB becomes a second home to both the staff and the students, and, together with the parents, ISB becomes one huge family. I feel privileged to have been a member of the ISB staff for a quarter of a century and will always cherish the fond memories I have of these 25 years.”

Draginja Jetic long term teacher, I joined the staff at ISB in 1987 and taught there for the following 25 years.



Definitely the Bugs Malone Musical! We rented a big old theater in the center and had these “guns” brought in from Romania (that’s a different story) that shot silly string out. It was a mess at the end but the kids had so much fun and worked so hard on that play.

Hands down GORAN! is such an amazing person. He remembers everyone and can do anything for you. One time our kids took a Taxi home for “Kineski centar” and the driver couldn’t understand where they wanted to go as it was a little tricky to get to our house in Senjak. So they knew we couldn’t communicate any better. They dialed Goran at 8 pm on a Friday and handed the phone to the driver. “Molim” is all the driver said and five minutes later they were home. Then Goran called them back to make sure they arrive safely. Meanwhile as parents we didn’t know any of this happened!

Our first day/night in Serbian was the derby between Red Star and Partizan soccer teams. The route to the game from the tram station ran RIGHT in front of our house. All these armed police showed up with full riot gear to protect the neighborhoods but our friends thought it was a military coup or something. It was so funny and intense. Also the first taxi ride we took with the family of four was to the Beer Fest carnival. As we rode in the taxi the driver went by the bombed out building next to the hospital. He said “That’s your Bill Clinton’s handy work” I said “Oh, I’m sorry” he said don’t worry. In Serbia we don’t hold good people responsible for their governments wrong doings!” What a great way to view and understand geopolitics!”

Buddy and Cassie Habeck with their children Hadley and Declan Habeck (both ISB students)





“It was a life changing event for us to live and work at ISB in Belgrade. It was exciting and educational to live in and learn about Serbian culture in a way that is only possible by living there. We also loved the association with families from all over the world. We developed many long lasting friendships with both ISB staff members and families. The staff itself was very diverse and the core of it, made up mostly of Serbs and American or British teachers who were living permanently in Belgrade, can be credited with the quality and the continuity of the school. ISB was a place in which people from many diverse backgrounds came to live and learn together. It always was characterized by warm and welcoming atmosphere.

It was the country of Yugoslavia at the time. Tito held the provinces together and it was possible to travel freely all over the country, which we did. In many places the country was under developed by western standards but the people were always friendly, helpful and welcoming to us, no matter where we were.”

Lee and Maurine Johnson (Pittsford connection), We were teachers there for two years, from 1975 through 1977.



“I had lived my entire life in the United States and wanted to immerse myself in another culture. I liked ISB’s smaller school size and their MYP and IB programs.

ISB really embraced MYP but as a teacher I had a lot of flexibility in how I taught the curriculum. I loved doing experiential learning activities in my class such as putting my students “in the trenches”. I also taught “Create a Country” with the 8th graders. This was a great project in which students actually created their own country from currency to political system.

Working at ISB was on my favorite life experiences. The friends I made, the travel opportunities, and experiencing Serbia has been unforgettable. The students I worked with there are etched in my mind forever. Luka wanted to be a UN peacekeeper. Vlad always thought he knew best. Bozidar made me smile. Alienor & Olga felt like friends. And Ffion was always up to something. I miss them all. My husband has to often remind me that I’m not actually Serbian! Serbia will forever feel like home.”
Nicole Burmingham, I was at ISB from 2005-2007. I was a Humanities Teacher in grades 6-10.

My family moved to Belgrade because of my father’s work as a diplomat for the Chilean government. The Belgrade I lived in was still the capital of Yugoslavia, Marshall Tito still lead the government and it was a very safe and boring place to live. Please consider I was 13/16 years old at the time and Belgrade didn’t offer much in terms of shopping, social life or entertainment, other than the foreign community and the American Embassy Club at the time. We had, on the other hand, ample freedom to move about town on our own, take the bus wherever we needed to go and enjoy fresh air activities in the many parks and sports facilities available in Belgrade. One of our favorite places was Kalemegdan, where my friends and I would walk for hours, climbing the walls and playing on the tanks displayed at the Military Museum.

I started in 1977 in seventh grade at the only campus the school had at the time, in the old house. Our seventh grade class was fairly small with a wide sample of nationalities. If I recall correctly we were around 17, with Mrs. Obradovic as our class teacher.

We looked forward every year to social events sponsored by the school, like the School Spring Bazaar, the Pet Show, or the various dances we had both in winter and spring. With the school being so small at the time, not more than 200 students if that many, the dances were not very formal or elaborate affairs. Our eighth grade graduation ceremony was a simple cocktail in the library with our parents. Eighth grade was the last grade the school offered at the time.

Our entire High School was 12 students at it was most crowded. We used the Guest Cottage of the Australian Residence as our classrooms and the park as our yard, where we improvised baseball games with one bat and a few tennis balls. We were allowed use of the tennis court, and swimming pool, within reason. My memories of those two years are etched in my mind as some of the happiest of all my school years. Our curriculum was demanding, we had fixed times to submit our work and our tests and we had to communicate via regular mail with our teachers based in Nebraska. Notice that we had no internet back then, so everything took time. However, the experience was very rewarding, both in the level of academic achievement and in the depth of human relationships. I still to this day keep in touch with 3 of my 5 ninth grade classmates, and with the first teacher who joined us in that adventure.



My family and I left Belgrade for my father's new posting in Montevideo, Uruguay, on the first of May 1980, only days before Marshall Tito's demise. I always felt I had been cheated out of being a part of history by not being in Belgrade during his funeral. I saw it on television with profound longing for the places shown.

It would be impossible to remember my years in Belgrade without the International School of Belgrade. It was the center of our social life, our only source of friends, our window into a Belgrade we couldn't otherwise touch. Through Facebook and other social media I still keep in touch with many of the friends I made nearly 40 years ago at ISB, friends from many nations, who have led different lives, but still joined by the memories we carved at the school. What I learned there goes well beyond the merely academic, and I have the best memories of those years. I have been told you no longer sing the school song as we did, and that made me a little sad, because my experience of ISB can be summed up in that song more than in any other way."

Maria Eugenia/ Meg (student), student at the International School of Belgrade for 4 school years,





At the end we would like to say thank you to all our alumni for their wonderful contributions.

Special thanks goes to Ms. Anne Jovovic for supplying us with the email contacts.

We would also like to extend our thanks to members of our journalism class who put so much effort into gathering and organizing the information. Thank you,

Ashima Parnerkar

Alexander Schrandt

Itai Shpigel

Jiazhen Miao

Lukas Hannula

Szymon Blaszcuk

Teodor Mali

Carmen Bollhorn

Nikolas Stojkovic



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ISB BLOG



ISB Director, Mr. Andrew Derry, will be blogging regularly about innovation and new trends in education and other relevant topics.

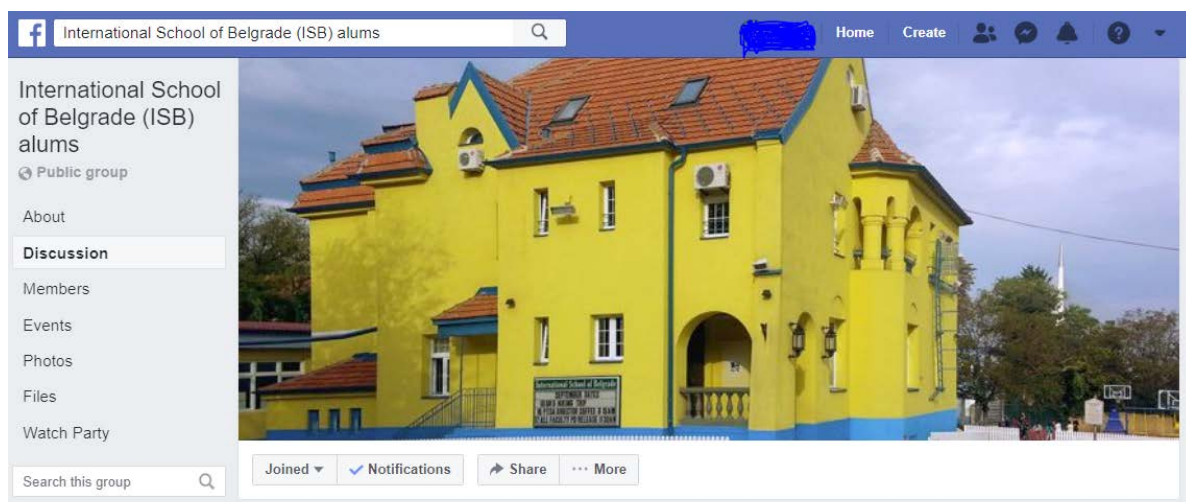
“I am sure we have all heard schools say, we ‘Personalize’ learning, but what does this really mean, and do all schools mean the same thing when they use the phrase? The short answer, of course, is no.”

Continue reading at
international-school-of-belgrade.blogspot.com



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The International School of Belgrade
*Wishes you all the best for the Holiday Season
and a prosperous New Year!*

Quality International Education for the Leaders of Tomorrow

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