

Newsletter RIS Swiss Section 2015-16

First Issue

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Dear Friends of RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok!

It is our great pleasure to present the first issue of the newsletter for the 2015-16 school year. With this first issue of the newsletter we would like to introduce you to some of the new staff members at our school. Through this newsletter you'll get a good impression of these new staff members' talents and interests. In addition to this, with this newsletter and future additions we will also inform you about special events going on at our school.

We wish you a pleasant and informative reading,

Simon Dörig, Head of School & Hendrik Schuhmacher, Editor



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SMV

Students' interview with the new school principal Simon Dörig

Why did you want to become a school principal in Bangkok?

Because I have passion for this job and also Bangkok is an exciting city in a wonderful country.

Why did you choose the RIS Swiss Section?

This German-speaking school in Bangkok has a conceptual framework that is proven over decades and has even opened doors for me around the world.

What do you do in your free time?

I like to eat fine cuisine and take trips around the region.

What is your favorite sports activity?

Skiing and hiking. Here in Thailand I take part in the teacher's fitness class and occasionally I go to the gym.

What is your favorite Thai dish?

Tom kha gai and penang curry, although not too spicy.

What do you like most about Thailand?

The warm and respectful way in which people treat each other.

What and where did you study at university?

I studied business at the University of St. Gallen and afterwards I studied pedagogy of economic subjects for the Gymnasium at the Pedagogical Institute of Thurgau.

How long do you plan to live in Thailand?

My current contract runs until July 31, 2018, with an option to extend it.

Have you been to Thailand before?

Fourteen years ago I was a volunteer with the Population & Community Development Association, which allowed me the first chance to get to know and appreciate Thailand.

What do you like, or not like, about our school?

I like the familial character of our school: students across different classes know each other and in that way can learn from each other. I also like that our school has a lot of greenery around it. I don't understand why parents who haven't seen our campus yet believe that a long way to school into the crowded inner-city is more comfortable for their children.

Were you a school principal at your previous school as well?

Previously, I was the business manager for a group of 18 schools for seven years, in which I filled numerous roles; subsequently I was responsible for three international schools in Switzerland and two in Germany.

Why did you want to work in schools?

The task of accompanying young people in the most important phase of their life, either directly or indirectly, is for me a very worthwhile type of work.

How old were you, when you knew what you wanted to be?

I discovered what I wanted to be in steps, which was and still is not always easy, but exciting. Nowadays it is rare that people stay with one career for their entire working life.

As a student, what was your favorite subject?

In primary school I liked singing; in secondary I liked geometry and then economics.



Students, teachers, administrative staff, parents and other guests were greeted with welcoming words from the Principal Simon Dörig.

What do you like most about your work?

I like seeing smiling faces every day. I enjoy working with the team, the entire learning community, and the school network.

What don't you like about your work?

That I cannot always accomplish everything as fast as I would like to.

Is there a comment box at this school?

Yes, there is one in the courtyard. I think it is important to have the opportunity to suggest and share ideas. This is why the representatives of the student council, the class speakers, and individual students are always welcome in my office.

Personal Description

Simon Dörig, Principal

Simon Dörig (born in 1979) attained his high school diploma at the Gymnasium St. Antonius in Appenzell and subsequently studied Economics at the University of St. Gallen (HSG). After receiving the Master of Arts HSG he was active in teaching, research and counseling at the Swiss Institute for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Entrepreneurship and Family Business. Due to his foundation of an international school, he got in touch with a group of private schools for which he worked for seven years. He was in charge of five international schools in Switzerland and Germany and a member of the management board. Simon Dörig taught Economics and Law for five years at a vocational school at upper secondary level (Berufsmaturitätsschule). He received the teaching diploma for Matura schools from the Teacher Training College Thurgau (Pädagogische Hochschule Thurgau) after successfully completing a Master degree of Advanced Studies in Secondary and Higher Education. In February 2015 he was appointed Principal of RIS Swiss Section-Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok as of 1 August 2015.



Parents

A short interview with Jens Eggert

Another new one – and quite a good one!

What's the first thing I heard from him? My daughter told me, after the first day of school: "He came in, and we had to stand up and greet him together in a choir!..." Now he is sitting in front of me, smiling, ready to listen, yet also confident about things. Jens Eggert has an inner calm, which is not to be taken for granted in this tropical heat.

Who are you, Jens Eggert?

I am a multiculturally oriented person who likes to live in many different places. Germany means a lot to me, as my roots are there. However, my wife is from the Philippines and our three children carry both cultures with them. I have lived with my

family in Turkey and Egypt. Also in Hamburg, Hong Kong, and now here in Bangkok as well. A person's home can be extraordinarily enriching. But for me, diving into a foreign environment is an exciting adventure, a kind of "life elixir". Thanks to this I have the opportunity to reflect and change my own cultural positions. This is a permanent process that I find especially important. It's what makes us true global citizens!

And why Bangkok?

We spent the last three years in Hamburg. However, I knew that I wanted to live abroad again. I have luck to thank for bringing us to Bangkok. A colleague showed me the job posting for the position in Bangkok; initially I personally hadn't even seen it. For this position here, previous experience in the administration of a German school abroad was desired. I happen to have this experience, and so it worked out. However before I had applied, we had a lot of intensive family meetings. We all had the same opinion that we wanted to come.

You had had some previous contact with RIS-Swiss-Section Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok, correct?

True, I was here at the school through friends in 1994. At that time I was just giving extra tutoring lessons for a student whose parents were both Thai, which was a rarity 20 years ago. And then again in 2004. Even then I started thinking of how nice it might be to teach here. The school in Bangkok attracted me with its openness, which is reflected even in the architecture of the school.

Your procedure of having the students stand up and greet you in unison has caused a lot of irritation among the young people. Are you in a way an old school teacher?

Getting along politely and a clear structure are important to me. This includes beginning and ending the lesson together. Since coming here, I've noticed the students are so well raised that I might even be able to shed the standing up part. Of course, when there are twenty-eight students, it can help the class begin more on time.

For the first time in your life, all three of your children are attending a school where you are not only teaching, but also in a leading management position. How does this change your perspectives between customer and provider?

I count this constant perspective switch as enrichment. On the small scale of things, I notice how important it is, for example, to make communications for homework clear and able to be followed once home. I notice this especially as a father with young children. As a father, I expect a school to communicate things clearly also in the larger scheme of things – which is where I enjoy my role in the school administration.

As for new colleagues, people say that in your first year, you observe things, in your second year, you develop ideas, and in your third year, you change things. What have you observed so far?

I have had the positive experience of noticing how my colleagues are en-

gaged to a very high degree with the students. More than that, we also offer an extensive array of support classes for our students. This is something the school can be proud of.

At a recent top-notch conference of the INSEAD (European Institute of Business Administration) in Singapore, it was stated that in ten years from now national final-exams and degrees will have no more relevance. What is your opinion to this as the vice principal of our school?

I cannot agree with this statement. Interaction with diverse nationalities, their educational systems, and their graduation programs have been important topics for me throughout my life. For example, the Swiss maturity, the way it is organized, executed, and what is expected from the students shows very clearly what is of value and importance to Switzerland. And it is wonderful that people in many countries can choose between completely different educational systems and degrees. What a waste-

land the educational sphere would turn into if only a few different kinds of school finishing programs - which would erase national identities - would allow entrance to universities!

Questions: Peter H. Hufschmid-Hirschbühl

Personal Description

Mr. Jens Eggert, Vice Principal, Head of Secondary

Jens Eggert (born in 1959) studied German Languages and Literature and Protestant Theology in Kiel and Paderborn. Upon completing his teacher training course and additional qualification to become a secondary school teacher for German and History, he taught at various schools including a Waldorf boarding school in Switzerland for six years. Subsequently he further developed the full-time concept at a Gymnasium in Hamburg. In 2006 he took over as Head of German Secondary School at the German-Swiss School Hong Kong. The main focus of his work there was, among many other areas, the implementation of working methods to strengthen self-dependent and self-reliant learning. After his return to Hamburg in 2012 he was, in his function as media advisor, strongly involved with new media in addition to his teaching load. Jens Eggert joined RIS Swiss Section-Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok at the start of the academic year 2015/2016.





Teachers

An introduction to the new School Psychologist and the new Special Education Teacher

New colleagues started their work in the new school year. Two of them will introduce and present their fields of work:

School Psychologist

My name is Annett Raich. Since the beginning of this new semester I have been the school psychologist of RIS Swiss Section. In this position I advise children, young people, and parents about possible solutions for questions about development and childrearing. Additional duties include prevention as

well as classroom or individual interventions when problems arise. I am also glad to give advice on offerings for support and therapy outside of the school setting.

My goal is to help each student reach positive character development and working habits so that they can feel comfortable at our school. My counseling can be done in German or English.

In connection to my work here, my first project at the school will be "Peacemakers on the schoolyard". This is an already tried and tested concept that has already been implemented in many schools in Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. Peacemakers is a prevention project whose goal is to train students to be able to solve conflicts in a non-confrontational way. This program offers assistance to students having difficulties with one another through a kind of peer mediation that attempts to find a solution that is acceptable for both parties. From each grade of classes 3-6, two students will be voted (one boy and one girl) to be trained as

peacemakers. In the training, which takes place during school time, various games about how to get along with one another socially will be used. Additionally, Peacemakers will learn when and how to get involved with the conflict situation as well as how to find a solution that is workable for both sides. Using role-play, students will learn together how to solve problems. I'm excited for this project and I'm looking forward to its success.

If there are any questions or concerns I am available by email at:
a.raich@ris-swiss-section.org.
I am glad to set up individual appointments as well.



Special Education

My name is Marc Lieball. Since the beginning of this school year I am employed as the special education teacher and teacher for students with special needs. I help intervene when there are special learning needs, for example learning difficulties or concentration difficulties that come about. My first line of duty is to work together with teachers. I work with the children from kindergarten to grade 6, so I am responsible for 12 classes.

I teach in various settings:

- One on one sessions, either for intensive observations, explanations, or special support
- Group sessions, when there are several students with similar needs
- Classroom teaching, this could take the form of team teaching or switching roles with the main teacher

Parent Contact

If it is required I get involved with the whole class on a case-by-case basis. Should the classroom teacher and I come to the conclusion that some special support for your child would be useful, then you would be getting contacted by the classroom teacher. Once we got your permission we can

start with the special support.

If you have questions about my field of work or me, then you are welcome to contact me directly. If you believe that some special support for your child would be important, then please contact the classroom teacher who will then get in touch with me. Of course I also participate in parent conferences when I am working closely with a child or as part of their learning team where my participation is important.

With questions you are welcome to contact me at this email address:

m.lieball@ris-swiss-section.org



Schools abroad during their former appointments. The Swiss ambassador was even a member of the Matura commission at our school some twenty years ago.

Both encouraged all members of the school community to maintain their great work and gave their full support for the upcoming challenges.



Following the reception in the inner school yard, the guests enjoyed an apéro and had the chance to welcome the new ambassadors in Bangkok.

RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok was delighted to welcome the ambassadors at such an early stage of their new appointments.

News

Visit of the new Swiss and German Ambassadors at RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok

On Wednesday, 23.09.2015, the new ambassador of Switzerland, his Excellency Mr. Ivo Sieber, and the new ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Peter Prügel, visited RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok in Minburi. The Excellencies were accompanied by Mr. Simon Kürsener, Third Secretary of the Embassy of Switzerland and Jan Blezinger, the German Counselor of Press and Cultural Affairs.

Led by the Senior Management Team and two students from grade 12, the visitors enjoyed a tour through the school campus and showed great interest in the children and the current activities in the school.

The guests were then received in the inner school yard by the students, teachers and other members of the school community. Students Ines Vänkä und Hanna Lorenzini presented them flower garlands. The school's Principal Mr. Simon Dörig expressed the desire that both Excellencies will also act as ambassadors of RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok.

During this part both ambassadors highlighted that they had various contacts with German and Swiss



Swiss author Arno Camenisch visits RIS Swiss Section-Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok

On 6.10.2015, RIS Swiss Section-Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok hosted Swiss author Arno Camenisch. Visiting authors and journalists are not uncommon for the school and are a great opportunity for the students to meet creative and innovative people in person.

Arno Camenisch was born in 1978 in the Graubünden region of Switzerland. He studied at the Swiss Literature Institute in Biel, where he now lives. Camenisch has won multiple prizes for his poetry, prose and drama, which he writes in both German and Rhaeto-Romanic. He is a member of the Spoken Word ensemble 'Bern is Everywhere'. His prose texts have been translated into 20 languages, including English, and published in *Best European Fiction 2012* (Dalkey) and *Harper's* magazine. *The Alp*, the first book in Camenisch's *Sez Ner* trilogy, was published for English readers in April 2014. *Behind the Station* and *Last Last Orders* were published in April 2015.

Already established on the international literary stage, Camenisch has read to audiences in many countries – and now in Bangkok.

At RIS Swiss Section-Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok Arno Camenisch offered the students a glimpse into contemporary life in the Swiss Alps and the challenges and hurdles that come with it. He read excerpts mainly from his novel *Behind the Station* in his mother-tongues, German and Rhaeto-Romanic, and discussed the content and his writing with the young audience. He managed to really involve the students and excite them about literature. A great achievement!

Therefore Arno Camenisch really met the challenge of addressing the students successfully. RIS Swiss Section-Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok was able to host Arno Camenisch with the help and support of the Swiss Embassy in Bangkok.





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