FISW Goes ‘Into the Wild’

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Our mission is to be the leading, culturally diverse and family-oriented international school with English as the principal language of instruction. We inspire individuals to develop their intellect, creativity and character to become independent, adaptable, socially responsible and internationally minded citizens, by ensuring a dynamic, inquiry-driven education of the highest standard.
FIS World is made possible through the efforts of our volunteer team of writers, photographers and editors. If you are an FIS parent and would like to join our team and contribute to this magazine, please contact Alec Aspinwall at alec_aspinwall@fis.edu. The only experience required is a passion for our students and their education.
As I prepare to leave Germany for my annual trip to recruit teachers for the coming year, I constantly remind myself that nothing is more important than ensuring our school has the finest teachers found anywhere, and that is why we actively search on three continents to fill every available faculty position that comes available at FIS. Our faculty is the bedrock of our community.

You have heard me extol the quality of our faculty on many occasions, but I also want to share the importance of every adult that interacts with children on our campuses. You may find Stephane and our security team intimidating as they attempt to control traffic, but I have also witnessed how compassionate they can be when a child is waiting alone to be picked up by a parent that is running late on a given evening.

When a child feels suddenly ill or has an accident on the playground, there is no person more important than one of our school nurses. Their work is often behind the scenes, giving children medication, offering concern at the latest scrape or bump, or giving critical medical advice to new parents trying to navigate the German health care system.

Another group of unsung heroes is our food services staff. They provide the fuel that keep our students going throughout the day and are somehow able to continue to smile even after serving hundreds of students who can barely take their eyes off the food long enough to offer a greeting.

Outside of the school day, our athletic coaches are just beginning their work that sometimes lasts late into the evening or begins hours before school starts at the local pool. They sacrifice weekends to chaperone trips, sometimes with the unenviable task of being caught in hours of traffic while sharing a bus with a horde of sweaty students.

And then there are those who are rarely seen but are the foundation of our school’s operation: the hausmeisters and cleaning crews that keep our huge campuses functioning. They solve more problems in a day than I tackle in a week and spend the evenings renewing the school so that each morning it is again ready to withstand the onslaught of active students. Even as I write this letter in the late evening hours, there is snow being removed from the schools’ parking lots, and most likely in Naurod as well, so that we all have a safe arrival in the morning.

FIS is very fortunate to have a community of caring adults to support the needs of our students. One of my New Year Resolutions for 2013 is to remember how important they all are and to make a special effort to thank them for making this school such a special place.

Paul Fochtman, Head of School
As the Board of Trustees Chairperson, I am often hesitant to share my personal experience as an FIS parent. I recognize that all families are different and my unique experience as an FIS parent, while important for my understanding of our school, is no more than a single perspective among many.

However, as the parent of a recent FIS graduate who has just finished her first semester of university, I cannot help but offer the following personal observation: Our school does a tremendous job preparing its graduates for life after FIS. I cannot think of any more compelling evidence of our school’s success in helping students become “independent, adaptable, socially responsible and internationally minded citizens” than to see our graduates thrive in the “real world” upon leaving the FIS campus.

I do not need to share my daughter’s stories of her first semester at university because I am sure most of you have heard similar stories from parents of other recent graduates. The combination of an FIS graduates engagement with a demanding IB curriculum, the personal support received from caring and competent faculty, and their exposure to cultures from around the world, gives our graduates an immeasurable advantage in facing the challenges that lie ahead.

I know many of you reading this article may have very small children and graduation seems to be an event that is too far off to comprehend. But just as your child likely went from a helpless infant to a capable student in the blink of an eye, so too will you soon find yourself discussing universities and leaving home, amazed that your child has grown so quickly.

And while today we may have no idea if young FIS students will be interested in pursuing degrees in medicine, business, or the arts, I do feel confident in predicting they will be ready to excel in whatever choice is made. They will be prepared not only because our students leave FIS with a strong academic foundation, but they will also be inspired to adhere to values and ideals that will make them fine human beings as well.

Whether our children are older or younger, we must cherish every moment with them. While we cannot slow the speed at which they move toward their independence from home, we can be confident that there is no better place than FIS to help them (and us) to be ready for that day!

Mike McKay, Chair Board of Trustees
On 25 January each year, many Scots around the world observe Burns Night, a celebration of their most celebrated poet, Robert Burns. On January 26 of this year, several Scots at FIS shared their festival with the FIS community by organizing a Scottish evening. In Gaelic this social gathering is called a “céilidh” and traditionally involves “poetry, singing, dancing, music…and a ‘wee-dram,’ which make these occasions fun for all,” according to Donna Marquardt, a 20-year veteran of FIS and descendant of the McCulloch Clan of Scotland.

Although there were many kilts to be seen, the event was far beyond an opportunity for Scottish and Scottish-wannabes to dress in traditional Scottish garments. The live-band from Scotland brought along a professional “Dance Caller” who explained and called the steps so all could dance to such famous songs as “The Dashing White Sergeant”, “Strip the Willow”, and “The Eightsome Reel.”

There was much more than just Scottish dancing to be experienced. A Scottish buffet of smoked salmon, roast beef, cheese and cock-a-leekie soup were served. The traditional meal was served with the appropriate companions; Scottish beer and whisky. Over 100 different whiskies were available through FIS parents Julia and Götz Nourney who shared their knowledge of this popular Scottish cultural tradition with a large enthusiastic crowd. But before the buffet was opened, Donna Marquardt read ‘Selkirk Grace’, a pre-meal prayer also made famous by Robert Burns.

An integral part of a Burns night is the “Address to the Haggis”.

Hamish Lawson Smith, another FIS staff member with roots in the town of Bowmore on the Isle of Islay, Scotland had the honor of carrying the haggis accompanied by the Japanese (!) bag piper Masaki. This traditional food was admired enough by Robert Burns to inspire a poem in its honor, which was recited brilliantly by the Scottish Upper School English teacher, Andrew MacDonald. Despite learning that haggis – among other things - is made of sheep inwards and encased in a sheep’s bladder, there were many guests who gave it a try – and more than a few who found it delicious!

Kenny Macaulay, the FIS Athletic Director, looking very dashing in his family tartan, rounded off the evening by singing his favorite songs and quizzing the crowd on their knowledge of Scotland. The Scottish Night was brought to an evocative close by all singing “Auld Lang Syne”, another Burns poem put to music and traditionally sung not only to start the New Year but to end a “céilidh”.

Surely, the many participants at FIS Goes Scottish will not forget what they learned about Scottish traditions, the work of Robert Burns, and the sight of their Head of School, Paul Fochtman, in a kilt.

Emmett Kelly, FIS parent
Yuck! Being disgusted is so much fun!
What is at the heart of learning at FIS? In the case at hand, it was literally a (pig’s) heart! But on the larger scale of things, the word that describes what happens in the classrooms at FIS is engagement, involving and exciting students about learning. For an observer like me, passing along the Grade 4 hallway on a bleak November day, learning looked a lot like plain old fun!

The first thing I noticed was an audible buzz coming from the classrooms. Peering in classrooms I saw some Grade 12 students with smiles on their faces while elaborating on some gory specimens lying before them. They were thoroughly enjoying the reaction of the Grade 4 students crowding around them. There were giggles and some theatrics, but the majority were fully captivated looking and poking at the heart and lung in front of them.

The comments were priceless: “How did the guy die?” or “You don’t mean to tell me people eat these things! I will never eat a sausage again!” But the youngsters also impressed, and even stumped the Grade 12 students with the use of terms like bronchial tree and cardiac arrest. And the visuals reinforced graphically the learning that preceded them: “This was a healthy pig! The aorta is huge with no blockage; my finger fits inside” and “I get it now. The heart is so hard because it is a muscle and the lung so squishy because it has to expand when we breathe.”

The project started out a few years back as a demonstration of the heart and lung function by Upper School biology teacher, Liza Gorkiewicz, to Grade 4 students during their Unit of Inquiry, Who We are; The Better Me, which is all about health, physical fitness, and nutrition. It was Grade 4 teacher, David French, who suggested that Grade 12 Standard Biology students give the presentation this year. This would not only solidify their recently-acquired knowledge through preparation and instruction, but would help the younger students engage more with the subject matter by adding the excitement of learning from older students they admire and look up to.

What are the long-term advantages of such a collaborative learning experience beyond knowledge of the heart and lung? It gave two Grade 12 students considering a teaching career a chance to explore their interest. And believe it or not, some of the Grade 4 students came away with some career plans of their own. Ariana still wants to study biology, but only plants! Holly has decided she no longer wants to be a doctor, while Bryan, who had no problem with the “disgusting stuff”, feels he can still go into dentistry as planned.

Vera Thiers, Marketing & Outreach
Each year FIS brings visiting authors to the school to discuss their work, but now the school has a published author among its parent community.

Matthew Westfall spent years researching a harrowing tale from America’s imperial history. The inside cover of his book, *The Devil’s Causeway*, offers this description: “In 1899, a naval officer’s reckless grasp for glory triggered a real American Heart of Darkness—a rebel ambush, America’s first prisoners of war in the Philippines, their forced march through triple-canopy jungle and behind enemy lines, and one of the greatest rescue missions in US Army history.” The work of narrative nonfiction has received critical praise on many fronts, including a coveted ‘starred’ review from Publishers Weekly that calls it “a thrilling and fast-paced adventure story that brilliantly illuminates an untold aspect of one of America’s first overseas wars.”

FIS World interviewed Mr. Westfall to gain a better understanding of his journey as an author.

**FIS W:** What made you choose to write about a little-known historical incident?

My work in international development brought me to the Philippines nearly three decades ago, and over the years I’ve been fascinated with the country’s history, particularly the early American colonial period. Through the years, I have read many books written on the era and then began collecting manuscripts, letters and photographs related to the Philippine-American War. And then I stumbled on an incredible photograph of a band of American prisoners of war, taken on the morning of the liberation in the uncharted wilds of Northern Luzon, which you will find on the cover of the book. The more I dug, the more was drawn to this incredible tale of debacle, siege and survival.

**FIS W:** What was the most difficult challenge you had to overcome in writing your book?

Since the incredible narrative of these prisoners of war had never been told in its entirety, it required years of research in archives in the US, Spain and the Philippines, with the story revealing itself like a jigsaw puzzle, one document at a time. Until the end of the research, I actually wasn’t sure I had a story worth telling. And then of course I have a full-time job, so my writing was at night, on weekends, often at great cost to our family time.

**FIS W:** Do you have a favorite author that has influenced your writing?

There are a number of narrative nonfiction writers that I admire. Nathaniel Philbrick and his work, *In the Heart of the Sea*, the story of the Whaleship Essex would be one. Hampton Sides, Laura Hillenbrand, Erik Larson are also great writers in...
Looking back to my childhood, I’d have to tip my hat to Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak and Mad Magazine.

**FIS W:** How has your book been received by the public?

I am amazed at the positive feedback. I was very fortunate to get a coveted “starred” review from Publishers Weekly, the publishing industry’s bible, which attracted a lot of attention. But best of all is the feedback I’ve been getting back from individual readers, who have said they are now more interested in history, or now see this period of time in a different light, or even better, have learned about a long-forgotten relative. And I was stunned to find the book available in Hugendubel right here in Frankfurt!

**FIS W:** Why would this historical book be of interest to today’s reader?

On a character level, it’s really the story about one man’s reckless grasp for glory and the consequences of hubris and arrogance – I think we can all learn from that. And from the perspective of military history, the Philippine-American War, a counter-insurgency campaign that is often called “America’s first Vietnam”, has striking parallels to the recent conflicts we have been fighting.

**FIS W:** How long was the process, from writing your first sentence to seeing the book published?

I started the research in early 2007 and completed the final manuscript, after scores of drafts, at the end of 2010. I then pitched a book proposal to various literary agencies in New York, signed with an agent in 2011, who then pitched it to the big publishing houses and then launched the book in September 2012. So almost six years – from a blank sheet of paper to a book on the shelf.

**FIS W:** What advice do you have for aspiring authors?

Keep writing, don’t push it off, don’t procrastinate, just jump into it. The more you write, the more you will find your voice. Also think about your ‘platform’ – why would a publisher be interested in you, what is your expertise on the subject matter, and who is your potential audience? And above all, don’t give up.

The FIS Upper School library has two copies of *The Devil’s Causeway* available for check-out. You can also visit the author at [www.matthewwestfall.com](http://www.matthewwestfall.com) and at his Author Page on Facebook.
- Chicken Nuggets and Salad
- Mathematical Plate
- Fruit Salad
- Manners Matter
- Müsli-Fruit Division
- Count the Pasta
- German Sausages
- Italian Pizza
- Korean Kimchi
- Japanese Sushi
- Placemats, Cutlery and Glasses
- How to say ‘Please’
- Academic Dessert
- Ice Cream for Smart Kids
Primary Dining at FIS

The “hot lunch” menu on a recent wintry day for the children in Pre-Primary included cauliflower medallions, baked potatoes, and a side dish of carrots, cucumbers and sweet peppers. While not on menu, but served in generous portions, were math, language skills, and manners.

Since April 2012, the children in Pre-Primary have been taking their lunches while simultaneously receiving deliberate, academic instruction. The Pre-Primary team of Fiona McArthur-Weber, Kristi McEwen and Katherine McIntosh, are now keeping their children in the classrooms during lunch and integrating learning into the lunch routine.

“Lunch used to be uncivilized,” said Ms. McArthur-Weber, who added “Children were behaving as silly as possible.” According to Ms. McEwen, “Now lunch is also about social studies, math, and language.” The Pre-Primary team was inspired to improve the lunch experience after they experienced a similar initiative while visiting the Reggio Emilia school system in Italy in early 2012.

The new lunch routine begins with children counting the total number of students in class that day, and collecting the needed plates, cups and utensils. “We are now using lunch to teach valuable math skills,” said Ms. McEwen. “It is not just a number on a page. It is practical math. It is ‘one-to-one correspondence’ teaching.”

“The children love it. They are imitating their parents. It’s a family atmosphere,” said Ms. McIntosh. The children set their own tables in the classrooms and sit where they choose. They are also encouraged to talk about topics that interest them.

On that day in Ms. Ewen’s class, Dann spoke about monsters and tigers while his table partner, Yazan, spoke of dinosaurs. Caroline, sitting between both, said “They are being silly. I like zebras.”

The fact that Dann is Dutch, Yazan is American, and Caroline is German creates an atmosphere that encourages children to learn about each other’s cultures and languages. “Lunch conversations are especially important learning opportunities for our English as a Second Language (ESL) students,” said Ms. McEwen.

While the students are encouraged to learn and act more mature during lunch, the atmosphere wouldn’t be mistaken for high tea at The Ritz in London. “It’s not perfect,” said Ms. McArthur-Weber, “They are four and five year olds.”

“Kids were not eating well, and lots of food went into the bin,” said Ms. McArthur-Weber. Since starting this program, neither much time, nor much food has been wasted by the Pre-Primary students. “We should make every moment an opportunity for learning,” said Dr. Weaver, the Primary School Principal, who added, “Lunch can be more than just nutrition.”

Emmett Kelly, FIS parent
All the right gear to go outside!
For the 15 lucky students in Amy Wright’s Primary class at FISW, nature beckons.

Almost every Monday since the school year began, Ms. Wright has been leading her class out into the nearby woods to explore. Ms. van der Poel’s Pre-Primary class often joins in the excursion.

“The forest provides an environment where the students are intrinsically motivated to explore,” Ms. Wright says. “In the woods, they are inquiring, taking risks, making connections and learning in a real world environment.”

Ms. Wright was inspired to take her teaching outside after attending an Early Childhood Education conference in Greece in 2012. A presenter from the International School of Basel shared her experiences in leading similar lessons and Ms. Wright thought, “I can do this, too!”

Her proposal to FISW’s principal, Ms. Andrea Rosinger, and her class parents was met with great enthusiasm – since the weekly excursions began, parents have grown accustomed to sending their children off to school with extra socks, boots, or warm snacks depending on Monday weather conditions. While Ms. Wright’s effort in getting her students out into the woods is new for FISW, the outdoor-classroom concept is common throughout Germany and Western Europe. Since the mid-1960s, the number of forest classes or “Wald-kindergartens” in Germany has grown significantly and today number in the hundreds countrywide.

Although temperatures hovered near freezing and a light snow fell on the first Monday outing of January, Ms. Wright’s students – coined “water
scientists” for the day – were unfazed. Protected by heavy suits and woolen stocking hats they “ooohed and ah-hhed” at the various ice formations along their path to the woods, stopping occasionally to chip off pieces and place them in the various containers, magnifying boxes and nets they were carrying.

But the real excitement came with the discovery that their resident pond had completely frozen over. Rocks and sticks were tossed out onto the hard surface in hopes that the ice would open enough to dip a beaker into the pond to collect a sample. The “water scientists” had planned to study its contents, take measurements and touch it to determine its temperature.

The ice proved too thick to conduct their intended experiment but opened up another opportunity for learning. By comparing the still frozen pond on one side of the trail with a trickling stream on the other, Ms. Wright was able to engage her students in coming up with different hypotheses about why that was so. Students raised their hands and then offered their ideas: “Because there is more water in the pond?” “Because the water is smaller?” And finally, “Because the water is moving?”

It is that type of inquiry-based learning that makes Wright’s outdoor sessions so valuable to her students. Each visit to the woods is connected to a Unit of Inquiry. For example, in a unit called “How We Organize Ourselves,” students brainstormed goals for their forest visit and then worked together to formulate a plan, collect materials and assign duties for the construction of a large hut made of sticks and branches.

In another unit, “How We Express Ourselves,” students sat in a circle and passed around a stick. The challenge for each of them was to come up with a unique and creative alternative to describe what they were holding. As the stick made its way around the circle, it became a conductor’s wand, a violin, a pencil, and a flower.

The students’ experiences in the forest aren’t just limited to Units of Inquiry, however. They also provide context for in-class lessons. “When we were learning about patterns, my students would reference patterns that they had found in nature,” Ms. Wright said.

And there are indirect benefits, too”, Ms. Wright added. “We’ve noticed that the students are better able to focus in the classroom after their physical, sensory and social experiences in the forest.”

In a world that has become more urbanized, an increasing disconnect to nature has given rise to new conditions like “nature deficit disorder” and “biophobia.” As such – whether they know it or not – the physical connection to the natural environment has also become an important part of the students’ visits to the woods. “They have already become more comfortable outside and more conscious of taking care of their environment,” Ms. Wright said.

In teaching the kids about nature in nature, Ms. Wright has learned something, too. “With the students’ help, I’ve also become more comfortable being immersed in nature,” she said. “I now happily hold worms, bugs and slide down muddy hills.”

Ryan Karr, FIS Webmaster
University-Life Brings Change

I t is late November and the weather in Edinburgh has taken a turn. It is no longer sunny and mild. Rather, it is now chilly and the sky is often overcast. Nevertheless, this is the least of my worries. The semester is winding to an end. I’ve now been at the University of Edinburgh for three months, and they have undoubtedly been filled with the biggest changes in my life so far.

I graduated as a member of the FIS Class of 2012 last spring. At the time, I was nervously awaiting my IB re—results in the hope of obtaining a place to study Music at the University of Edinburgh. In an interesting turn of events, however, I now find myself studying Business Studies at the University of Edinburgh. The change was not one people expected and many relatives and friends are still trying to understand why I made it. So, I thought I’d explain.

In the September of my Grade 12 year at FIS, I ordered a mound (imagine, if you will, more than a bookshelf’s worth) of university prospectuses. I was undecided as to what to study. Should I go into Marketing and pursuing topics of interest from my IB Business course? Or perhaps I could study Music and continue my childhood hobbies. Or maybe something a little further from my IB courses such as Architecture, Politics or Journalism. The decision was challenging but I eventually opted for Music, wrote my personal statement and applied to some of the United Kingdom’s finest universities including Edinburgh, Durham and York at the beginning of October. Job done? So it would seem.

But what do you do after IB exams are over and once that long summer holiday of waiting begins? You can, like many, spend it celebrating continuously or you could opt to be a little more civilized and improve your Curriculum Vitae (CV). The latter was my choice. I took two jobs, one working in the Marketing Department at FIS and the other working as an employee at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Deutschland, the German arm of one of the ‘Big Four’ accountancy firms, where I worked in IT Business Management.

I know, the students among you (and perhaps others) probably think I was crazy and I don’t blame you but I urge you to think again. The days I spent in professional environments working on real-life projects were some of the most valuable educational experiences I have ever had. Not only do you see things from an entirely different perspective but your colleagues also give you invaluable advice.

On my last day at PwC, my boss sat with me for an hour and discussed my summer work. I would be in Edinburgh in seventy-two hours to start university but one thing she said to me changed everything: “A music degree is nice but is it really what you want in life?” This got me thinking. The summer had changed my views and aspirations in many ways and despite my love for music and listening to it, I really wasn’t interested in studying it anymore. I just wanted to enjoy it.

Arriving at university, I spent the first few days making friends within my halls. Some people say that the friends you make in Fresher’s Week are not your true friends. I beg to differ - my best friends today are the ones who were there for me in Fresher’s Week and helped me as I pondered the question, “Do I change course or do I stick with it?” The end result was a change from a Music degree to Business Studies. Had I not worked at PwC over the summer, the accountancy part of the course might have seemed boring to me - it did to many people - but because I spent the summer working, this part of the course was of great interest to me.

The moral is that the decisions we take are not set in stone; many are reversible. So if you don’t know what course you want to study when you get to university, I’d recommend that you pick something you are interested in. The second piece of advice I would give is go and get some experience. Even if it turns out that your summer work wasn’t for you, it will give you valuable experience and your colleagues will support you in so many ways. You may just find yourself with new interests.

Christopher Sladdin, Class of 2012
At the Top of Their Game

Each year, the Athletic Department and Athletic Booster Club (ABC) have the great pleasure in recognizing one female and male as ‘Varsity Athlete of the Year’. Additionally, The Athletic Booster Club also presents a male and a female athlete with an ‘ABC Athlete Scholarship Award’. There are a great number of talented student athletes, which makes the selection process rigorous and competitive.

Athletic Director, Kenny Macaulay, facilitates the selection process for the ‘Varsity Male and Varsity Female Athlete of the Year’. The process begins in the spring when the Varsity coaches are asked to submit nominations. The selection process is based on a number of criteria that include not only pure athletic performance but also exemplary sportsmanship, leadership and teamwork, dedication and commitment as well as an athlete’s capacity to serve as an ambassador for FIS and role model.

Based on the criteria, Mr. Macaulay initially evaluates all of the nominees and then develops a short list of nominees. A spirited discussion of the short list takes place during a meeting of the Varsity coaches.

After each nominee is thoroughly discussed, the Varsity coaches cast a closed ballot vote. In the case of a tie, it is at the discretion of Mr. Macaulay to have a joint award or break the tie. In particular, Mr. Macaulay will consider if the athlete had been a team captain or if he/she received any all tournament distinctions during the International Schools Sports Tournaments (ISST).

The ABC Athletic Scholarship Award undergoes a similar selection process which is led by Mr. Macaulay and input from the ABC Executive Board. The criteria for the ABC scholarship Award is a bit different. It includes high academic standards, student leadership, active involvement in other school activities and service, all combined with a student athlete’s contribution to the FIS athletic program.

According to Mr. Macaulay, it is a pleasure to have so many outstanding FIS athletes to choose from at the end of the school year.

Martha Boston-Majetic, FIS parent

March Madness

Basketball fans know March Madness to be the time of year when NCAA college teams in the USA compete for the national championship. This year FIS will host Europe’s March Madness, where the best international school basketball teams in the region converge on 7-9 March to compete for the ISST championship. There is nothing more motivating for our FIS players than to compete on their home turf with a sport hall full of cheering fans. Bring your whole family to watch our Frankfurt Warriors sink three-point shots, fight for rebounds and drive to the hoop as they try to climb higher in the ranks of Europe’s best teams.

As a reminder, the Athletic Booster Club will be operating the concession stand and selling hamburgers, hotdogs and panini’s, to feed your family while you cheer on our athletes!
Former FIS Teacher Funds Competition

Former FIS English teacher and Grade 12 Year Head, George Henning-Ross, has recently made a generous donation to the Annual Fund to establish an essay competition with a yearly prize of €1,000. The Henning-Ross English Award will be given to the Grade 11 or Grade 12 student whose 1,500-2,000 word essay on “Why English Matters” shows the most originality and authenticity and best exemplifies the International Baccalaureate (IB) English criteria. The competition is being organized through the FIS Writing Center, with faculty member Emma Wilson managing the effort. Students have until April 2013 to submit an entry, and essays will be assessed by a jury of at least two high-school English teachers. The winner will be announced in May, and the award and prize money will be given out at the graduation breakfast in early June.

Mr. Henning-Ross was a member of the FIS faculty beginning in 1972 and taught English in the upper school for 25 years. During his tenure, he helped introduce the IB program and was the English Department Coordinator for 15 years. He also served as Grade 12 Year Head for many years and was instrumental in producing “TRIAD,” a magazine for the arts. Despite having left the school in 1997, Mr. Henning-Ross continues to feel a strong bond to FIS and his former colleagues and students. When recently asked about his FIS experience, he wrote: “My career at FIS could not have been more satisfying…FIS has grown into a world-class school…and has been fortunate to have outstanding teachers committed to the onerous job of harnessing the energy and talent of hundreds of exceptional students. I would not change my history with FIS for any other.”

Behind his motivation to establish the essay competition is Mr. Henning Ross’ continued interest in challenging students to develop and express new ideas and concepts. “Young people, without the usual clichés adults are sometimes bound by, can breathe fresh air into familiar topics. It was always impressive to me when someone presented a new slant that had not been discussed in class or one that showed someone struggling to find an answer to a profound question,” wrote Mr. Henning-Ross. As to his reason for choosing the topic “Why English Matters,” he added, “English MUST be important: the whole…school writes, reads, speaks, and listens in English! Then there’s the babble in the hallways…that reminds us of the diversity of language and culture that also drives FIS. But what if that kind of confusion reigned in classes?”

Within minutes of posting the news of the Henning-Ross English Award on the FIS Alumni Facebook page, alumni from around the globe praised their former teacher with comments such as:

“He is the best teacher, mentor, and life coach in the world”;
“Mr. Ross was a great teacher! Love his great sense of humor. Wish my kids could have him!”;
“One of the best teachers I ever had!”;
“Mr. Ross rocks!!”;
“I loved Mr. Ross! He had a wonderful dry sense of humor. Fond memories!”; and,
“I have so much to thank Mr. Ross for! Hey, Mr. Ross, I’m a writer now!”.

With this generous gift and exciting competition, it appears that Mr. Henning-Ross did not leave FIS after all!

Tina Shealy, Manager of Development and Alumni Relations
FIS Students from India celebrating Diwali
Light is a mysterious thing. It's all around us, essential to life, yet nobody knows exactly what it is. Many of the world's brightest minds have burnt the midnight oil puzzling over its nature: Albert Einstein, for one, imagined running alongside a beam of light and asked, “If one would run fast enough, would light move at all anymore?”

To survive in the inky darkness of the deep sea, exotic fish and organisms make and emit light with their own bodies. Above ground, green plants use sunlight to make sugar and water, enabling them to grow and us to live. Sunlight “makes” colors: any color that a human eye sees is the part of sunlight that an object did not absorb.

Light is life, survival and renewal – little wonder that people have celebrated light since time immemorial, and carry on doing so today.

Light Around the World

All over the world, people light candles, lanterns and bonfires to celebrate light at important festivals. Star luminaries are a traditional decoration on the windows of Swedish homes throughout the dark Advent and Christmas season, and during the Las Posadas nine-day celebration in December in Mexico, honoring the pregnancy of Mary carrying Jesus. Parols, star lanterns as iconic to Christmas in the Philippines as the Christmas tree in Western cultures, decorate Filipino homes from as early as September and up to Epiphany.

In Rio de Janeiro, at midnight on any summery New Year’s Eve, people go to the oceanfront and send hundreds of lit candles, white flowers and gifts afloat on the water as offerings to Iemanjá, the African goddess of water, asking for good luck. In Thailand, on a November full moon, bad luck floats away during the Loi Krathong festival, where people place krathongs - lotus shaped vessels carrying candles, flowers and gifts – on rivers, and let them drift away after making wishes for the year ahead, thanking the goddess of water.

Lanterns are an indispensable feature of Saint Martin’s Day, the old European harvest festival celebrated in November in Germany, Holland and other European countries; and also of the Mid-Autumn Harvest festivals celebrated in September or October in China, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Vietnam. The Andean communities of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador celebrate the fertile harvest at Inti Raymi, the ancient Inca Festival of the Sun, on the June winter solstice, which is the summer solstice on the northern hemisphere.

Light and Enlightenment

We celebrate light literally and symbolically. More literal celebrations of light relate to the return of longer days, new crops, and good auspices of renewed life and survival in old agrarian societies; or literally to bringing light to the darkest time of the year.

Among the most literal celebrations of light is Sankta Lucia in Sweden, when girls and women dressed as Saint Lucia and her maids bring light and warmth at the darkest, coldest time of the year.

Symbolic festivals of light are typically important religious festivals celebrating light as enlightenment or as the triumph of moral positives (lightness) over negatives (darkness.) Soyal, a 16-day winter solstice celebration by the Hopi Indians, known as The Peaceful Ones, is a time for purification before the new cycle.
The Jewish Hanukkah, or Chanukah, celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, purity over adulteration, and spirituality over materiality. Hanukkah is celebrated in November or December and dates back to about 2500 years ago, when a Syrian king tried to force Jewish people to worship Greek gods. A small group of Jewish people rebelled and managed against all odds to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy temple. When the elders went to light the Temple's menorah (the seven branched candelabrum), they found only a single jar of olive oil, enough for one day. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days. This miracle became known as the “Festival of Light”.

Anat Blodinger, mother of two young children at FIS, explains:

“During Chanukah Jewish people in Israel and many places of the world are lighting candles in their windows as night falls. This winter holiday is a delight - eight days of songs, games, candlelight, gifts and delicious food. We're adding a little light to the world and reminding everyone not only of the miracle that happened to our ancestors long ago, but also of the fact that miracles still happen every day all around the world - and we will notice them if we keep our eyes open!”

The Festival of Light celebrated by the most people in the world, Diwali, celebrates the triumph of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, prosperity and the glory of light. Diwali means “rows of lighted lamps” specially decorated clay lamps called diyas. For many Indians today, Diwali honors Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, and many will leave their doors open with candles alit for the goddess to find her way there. Originally a Hindu celebration, Diwali marks in Hinduism the return of Lord Rama from a 14-year exile, after the defeat of the evil demon-king Ravana.

Illuminated Lives

Celebrations of light renew our belief that darkness shall yield to light. The sun does return from its winter slumber, crops do grow anew, easier times will follow hard times, troubles will be overcome, and relationships shall improve.

Across many different cultures and sets of beliefs, festivals of light remind us of the importance to be a bit like the bioluminescent fish in the ocean depths. To find light within us, mop up our darkness, spread our light around in dark times and places and go on shining when resources are short or not enough.

Maria Monteiro, FIS Parent
Grade 5 Creates a Wax Museum

Grade 5 Students recently completed their unit on exploration and discovery. During the unit they acquired significant knowledge about geography, navigation and technology from journeys of the past as well as current innovations that support space exploration.

Whenever possible they learned from first-hand experience. This included a field trip to the European Space Agency, science experiments and an orienteering adventure into the woods. The goal was for the students to not only become knowledgeable about explorers and their journeys, but also to recognize the commitment, perseverance and sheer bravery that characterizes these pioneers and their feats.

As a culminating sharing event, students chose an explorer to focus on and developed a biographical presentation of that person. Students recorded their presentations on Voicethread allowing their classmates to listen to the podcasts to learn more about a variety of explorers in preparation for their assessment assignment.

One Grade 5 Student said, “I was excited when my dad told me about my great-great grandfather. He explored his way to South America in Brazil and made friends with many tribes. He also learned their languages and learned about their way of life. He wrote several books about them and some are in a museum in Berlin. I liked dressing up like him and finding a beard to wear, but the best part was when my dad let me take a spear that he used off of our living room wall!”

Another said, “I was glad I had the opportunity to learn the role Michael Collins played in space exploration. It inspired me to become a pilot and eventually an astronaut.”

Parents and community members were able to admire the presentations during the Grade 5 Wax Museum night. The students, in costume, stood silently until brought to life by a touch. Once animated, they shared the biographical details of their explorer through memorized narratives.

The dramatizations were truly authentic and students’ recounts were informative, humorous and presented with confidence. Parents and family were impressed by their knowledge and enthusiasm. This event will serve as a wonderful preparation for the Grade 5 Exhibition in April.

Joanna Callahan, Gr 5 teacher
Alumnus Joins NFL

It all started when my friend and fellow Hoosier (that means we’re from the state of Indiana), Allison Juliet, said “Hey, want to go interview Andrew Luck? He used to go to FIS.” Weeks later, on a snowy day after Christmas 2012, our self-appointed sports journalism team sat down for a chat with Andrew Luck, the starting quarterback for the Indianapolis Colts – a National Football League (NFL) team in America.

When preparing for our interview, it was easy to see Luck is a gifted athlete - a recipient of the Maxwell Award, Walter Camp Player of the year, two-time Heisman runner-up, and first-round pick in the 2012 NFL draft. And, it was also easy to determine he took his studies seriously - he was the 2008 Valedictorian of Stratford High School in Houston, Texas and a graduate of Stanford University in 2012. After the Colts suffered a 2-14 season in 2011, Luck, in his first season with them, led the team to 11 wins and five losses, setting records along the way and earning him an invitation to play in the 2013 Pro Bowl.

All of these accolades could be a heady experience for a 23 year old but the person we met had just finished a team practice and was simply excited to be talking about his memories of FIS. Here are some interview excerpts:

**FIS W:** This was an article in a Stuttgart paper. [Handing him a copy.] At the end it talks about your offensive skills and accredits some of your football success to your German soccer experience!

**AL:** (Laughs) Happy to give them some credit! I played some soccer and basketball at FIS. I never played for a local (German) soccer club but I did practice with them.

**FIS W:** When you were living in Germany did you ever have opportunity to play American football?

**AL:** There was nothing organized but I remember playing during recess and teaching it to a few friends who were Australian, German, and English. There were a couple other Americans who knew how to play so we’d try to hide in the way back near some volleyball courts. We’d tackle each other but we’d get caught and get in trouble!

FIS was a great time. It was so fun going to a place where the high school, middle school, and elementary school kids were all in one place. I remember watching the high school basketball games and being so into it! Do they still have a basketball camp? It was a great basketball camp! I also remember FIS always having great bazaars and fairs, like Applefest, that was awesome!

**FIS W:** You remember some German it seems.
AL: I took it at Stanford for a year, my freshman year. At one point my parents say, I was fluent. I went to the German kindergarten and learned it there. My Dad's side of the family is German, from Karlsruhe so he's fluent in German and my mom picked it up as well.

FIS W: When you were living in Europe did your family do much traveling?

AL: We used to go skiing a lot in Austria. It was fun, looking back on it, I appreciate that my folks took us to places like Paris, and Switzerland too. I remember one time we got to go on a boat from Italy to Monte Carlo for some Formula 1 race. I think it had something to do with business for my dad but he got to bring us along. And then we got to see St. Tropez. All this for a 3rd grader!

FIS W: Do you remember having any moments of: Oh do we have to go to Paris again?

AL: No, I don't think I was that spoiled! My dad was working for NFL Europe and he traveled a lot. So I got to go with him sometimes, like on a trip we did to Amsterdam. I remember driving back in a rental car, and it was a big Mercedes, a huge one! My Dad was so stoked because he got to drive it from there to Frankfurt. I remember sitting in the passenger seat, reclining it back and thinking it seemed like a bed. I think I asked him why don't we buy a Mercedes and he said something like, ah, Skodas are great! (Laughs)

FIS W: You were pretty young when you attended FIS (Grade 3 and part of Grade 4). Have you been able to keep in touch with former classmates?

AL: With a lot of families, we exchange Christmas cards still and they are scattered all over. My mom went to ASL (American School of London) for high school and I went to ASL for a longer period of time than FIS so we have even more ASL family friends.

FIS W: Did you think it was difficult to transition back to the States?

AL: I was very nervous and I don't think I said a word the first month in my new school! We were moving in the middle of the school year too (grade 4)—so, I was still even more self-conscious because of that. And, we went to live in Texas, which is obviously a different culture in itself. But, it all worked out. When you live overseas you develop a sense of getting along with people because there are so many different people and places where everyone is from. So you just learn to adapt and accept and I think that has what has made moving easier for me and that's part of the reason why I wanted to go to school in California.

FIS W: Can you imagine ever being an expat again?

AL: I don't know about that because hopefully I will be playing this game for a little while more!

We have no doubt you will, Andrew.

Ellen Willson Hoover, FIS parent
More than 70 alumni gathered at the Builder’s Arms Pub in Kensington for a chance to share some good times and great memories with former FIS classmates and friends. Upper School Principal, Rhiannon Wood, and Elementary School Principal, Peter Baker, joined the group after a long day of interviewing potential teachers and staff, and had fun listening to the stories and experiences of “life after FIS” from some of their former students.

The majority of the alumni attending the event were FIS students from the past decade, and more than half of the guests graduated from FIS within the past 5 years. The largest turnout was from the Class of 1999, and FIS Manager of Development and Alumni Relations, Tina Shealy, was also very pleased that former students from the 70s and 80s attended the reception: “The reception was a great way to kick off this year’s alumni relations program. You could almost measure the FIS spirit and energy in decibels and it was a lot of fun seeing our alumni having such a great time reconnecting with their friends and times from the past. We will definitely have to continue this tradition every year!”

Tina Shealy,
Manager of Development and Alumni Relations
# Events Calendar

For up-to-date information on school events please visit our website at www.fis.edu

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<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
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<tr>
<td>18 - 22 February</td>
<td>Ski Break</td>
<td>No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 February</td>
<td>In-service Day</td>
<td>No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 February</td>
<td>Culture Coffee</td>
<td>Wiesbaden Campus</td>
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<td>6 - 8 March</td>
<td>FIS PTG BookFair</td>
<td>FIS PS &amp; ES</td>
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<td>7 March</td>
<td>FISW PTG Meeting</td>
<td>Wiesbaden Campus</td>
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<td>8 March</td>
<td>FISW Junior Dance Party</td>
<td>Wiesbaden Campus</td>
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<td>11 March</td>
<td>Board of Trustees Meeting</td>
<td>Parkhotel Waldlust</td>
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<td>12 March</td>
<td>Athletic Booster Club Meeting</td>
<td>ABC Office</td>
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<td>11 - 15 March</td>
<td>Sports Try-Outs</td>
<td>Sports fields</td>
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<td>14 - 15 March</td>
<td>PS/ES/FISW Parent Conferences</td>
<td>No school for PS/ES/FISW</td>
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<td>18 March</td>
<td>General Membership Meeting</td>
<td>FIS Auditorium</td>
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<td>19 March</td>
<td>FIS Faculty/Staff Appreciation Luncheon</td>
<td>Teachers’ Lounge</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 March</td>
<td>Sports Awards Night</td>
<td>FIS Auditorium</td>
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<td>21 March</td>
<td>IB Art &amp; Music Vernissage</td>
<td>FIS US</td>
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<td>25 March - 5 April</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 April</td>
<td>Grade 9 Project Exhibition</td>
<td>FIS US</td>
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<td>16 April</td>
<td>FIS US Choir Concert</td>
<td>FIS Auditorium</td>
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<td>17 April</td>
<td>FIS PTG Meeting</td>
<td>PS Assembly</td>
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<td>18 April</td>
<td>FISW PTG Meeting</td>
<td>Wiesbaden Campus</td>
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<td>23 April</td>
<td>Athletic Booster Club Meeting</td>
<td>ABC Office</td>
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<td>24 April</td>
<td>Grade 2 Endangered Animals Open House</td>
<td>ES Classrooms</td>
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<td>25 April</td>
<td>Renaissance Fayre</td>
<td>FIS US</td>
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<td>26 April</td>
<td>FISW Grade 2 - 5 Spring Dance</td>
<td>Wiesbaden Campus</td>
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<td>1 May</td>
<td>May Day</td>
<td>No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 - 5 May</td>
<td>Alumni Reunion Weekend (’88 and ’03)</td>
<td>FIS</td>
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<td>5 May</td>
<td>Worldfest</td>
<td>FIS</td>
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