



# St. Sometimes

## My New Career Move, Phnom Penh, Cambodia!

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Yes, it will soon be time to leave the “beautiful” country of Kuwait. Whatever! It is time to leave hell.

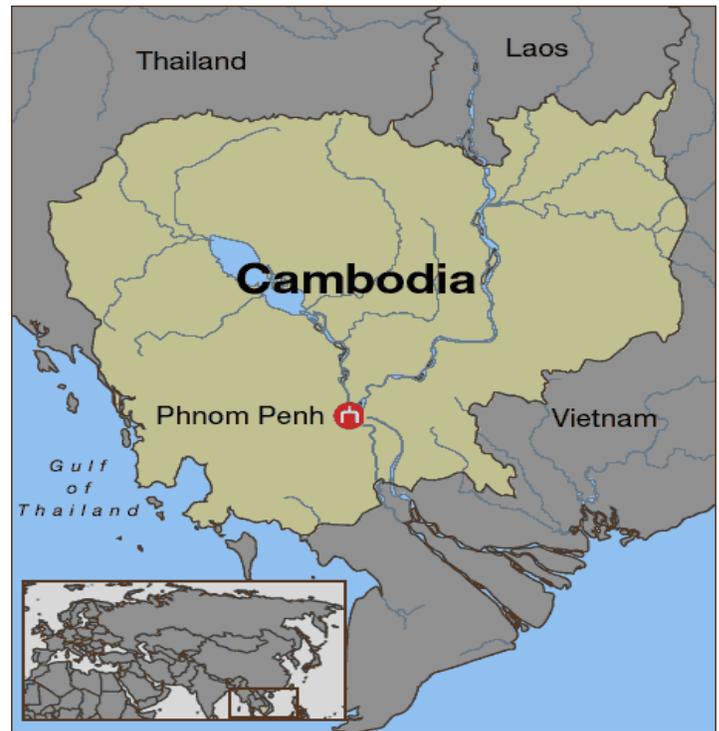
I just got back from a job fair in Bangkok, Thailand (more in this issue) where I interviewed with several schools from around the world.

This newsletter details what it was like to be at the job fair and find an international teaching position. Enjoy.

Basically, I will be teaching 2007-2009 or beyond at a small school in Cambodia. The superintendent is a New Yorker and runs a AAA school. I will be teaching a 4th/5th grade split class mainstream that is PYP, part of the IB program. International Schools are now beginning, more than ever, to participate in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. PYP is the elementary antecedent and

MYP is in between. It is difficult to get hired at an IB school if you haven’t trained in IB or worked previously in an IB school. My new school has all

three of the programs so I will be learning a lot. My philosophy is certainly aligned to PYP so look out CAMBODIA, here comes Lemoine!



### Special points of interest:

- My new school’s website is <http://www.ispp.edu.kh>
- Not coming home this summer. I am staying in Thailand and doing the dive instructor thing.
- Yes, I will miss the APHS reunion. Can it really be 20 years?

## Happy New Year! 2007.....NOT!

Years ago, I made myself a promise. I will spend New Years in a new country every year. So far so good. Unfortunately, this year was Kuwait. The most exciting thing that happened was one man poured water on top of another man’s head at 12:00 . I am not kidding. There was no alcohol, no

party, no NYR’s kiss, and no excitement. These Kuwaitis know nothing about quality of life. Billions and billions of dollars and life here is depressive.

Oh well. Never again. You cannot win them all. This was a real prison sentence, but it had

to be. I couldn’t afford to leave AND go to Thailand looking for a new job. Choices. In the end, it was the correct choice.

I will make up for it next year and I have plenty of memories from New Years past.

Hopefully your New Years 2007 was more meaningful.



ISS - International School Services

ISS holds international job fairs every year. This year they are in:

Bangkok, Thailand - January 10-14

San Francisco, California February 18-22

Boston, Massachusetts February 26- March 1

## WHO? WHERE?

Pattersons—Manila

Craig/Erin—Warsaw

Grant/Paula-Canada

Jonathan— Hong Kong

Trevor-Still Looking

Joanna/Neil-still looking

James-London

Jessica - I cannot remember

Mario/Kathleen - Bahrain

John - Tai Pei

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Lori Davidson is going to Japan! Congratulations Lori!

Michael Hirsch is still in Bangkok! See you soon.

Mooney ? Possibly Michigan? (don't go back!)

And there are many more. If you read this newsletter and have any more news of fellow friends, let me know. I just scratched the surface on this one.

## The Job Fair In Bangkok, Thailand

Bangkok, Thailand - Man I love the job fairs! Mario and I skipped school for a week and flew to the ISS fair in Bangkok.

This was my third trip to Bangkok in the last two years, so most of the excitement has worn off. This time the focus was the fair.

Preparation— I spent the entire winter holiday break preparing for the fair. I was prepared with a digital CV, three copies of my portfolio on paper, 20 copies of recommendation letters and my resume (in packets), and four suits. I had business cards printed out with a local Bangkok cell phone number and my emails. Kathleen had gone to Thailand for winter holiday and brought back a SIM card for me.

Are you sitting down? I even wore dark socks with my suits. I didn't want anyone to judge me as an incompetent fashion man until I made it in the door. (No, this was strictly during the job fair).



ISS held this year's International Job Fair at the Shangri La' Hotel.

**THE PROCESS** - This is the first of about 10 job fairs for international teachers every year. Usually, I go to the Iowa job fair at UNI, but that was not possible due to time and money. Many of you don't know how these fairs work. I will walk you through the excitement.

The fair is annual. It costs around \$500 US to be a member of ISS as a teacher and even more for the schools. The schools have to be accredited and there is a laundry list of requirements for teachers, including: certified as a teacher from a native English speaking country, minimum 2 years teaching experience,

transcripts, three letters of rec within the last five years, current licensure in your field, and deadlines of submission as early as the second week of October.

Once you have been accepted by the educational staffing committee, your documents and job interests are posted on their website and you are given a password and username. The schools go through a similar cycle. With the website postings, schools and teachers can start communications early in the year. Some teachers set up interview times via email. Some teachers get job offers without even going to the actual fair. I'd

## Mario and Kathleen in Bahrain 2007-2009

Mario is an educational (clinical) psychologist. His wife Kathleen is an international teacher. They are my family here in Kuwait. The three of us taught together in Honduras and I am basically the "Godfather" of their family, even though they don't have

any kids of their own.

Last year, M&K had an offer from the Ibn Khuldoon National School in Bahrain. The school flew them out and put them through a comprehensive set of interviews. M&K turned down their offer for 2006-7 because they would have had to

break contract in Kuwait. This year, the school offered Mario a lot more money and Kathleen the position of her choice. They just accepted the offer a few days ago. I am happy for them. Even though they wanted out of the Muslim world, it will be a real money-making contract for

**Job Fair:Cont from page 2...**

rather go to the interviews!

The first day of the fair you check into their conference office and get a packet of information. The most important piece of information is the updated list of positions each participating school has open. The list is alpha by school and again divided up by specific position. The office also has two sets of file folders set up as "mailboxes". Each teacher at the fair has a folder according to their last name. Each school, listed alpha by country then school, has their own folder. These mailboxes serve as the main communication between a school and a prospective teacher. When I arrived, I had two letters of interest waiting for me. One was a school in Mongolia and the other was in China.

Once I had checked in, I sat in the lounge of the hotel for a good six or seven hours pouring over the information packet and using the wireless access. Prior to the fair, I had already researched and contacted Singapore, Moscow, and a few other AAA schools, so I targeted those schools first. Only one of them had shown up at the fair, Singapore American School. I put a resume packet and CD in their mailbox so they knew I was interested. The rest of my time was spent researching the Mongolia and Chinese schools to see what they had to offer me. In addition, I knew there would be a sign up period the next day, so I made a plan of which schools

I would target for interviews.

That first evening a seminar was held for all of the teachers to discuss the logistics of the fair, the do's and don'ts of interviewing over the next few days. The main messages were: "Verbal agreements are legally binding" and "schools and teachers need to be clear about their intentions". It was impressive. About 400 teachers and 900 posted positions were at the fair. The odds were ripe for me to get a great job.

Day two started early at 8:00am with a "round-robin" style sign up session. All of the schools were set up at tables in alphabetical order by country. The teachers were let in first come-first serve basis to stand in line and sign up for an interview for the next few days. The whole thing was like a cattle chute! A few of us even started "moo-ing" and "baaah-ing".

I had a plan. First I would talk to the schools that had invited me to interview (Mongolia, and Xiamen-China). Then I would do a hard target search for Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Germany, Singapore, and Russia. Interesting story for each. I had a great talk with Singapore (SAS) but they didn't have a position for me. Germany was funny! I went up to Frankfurt and introduced myself, handing him a resume' packet. He just looked at me and said "NO!" No shit. That's what he said. No explanation. I said "because of no IB?" He nodded and said "NEXT". Hmm. In the end, I signed up for

only three interviews- Mt.Kiara in Kuala Lumpur, Ulanbataar in Mongolia, and Phnom Penh in Cambodia. The interviews were spread out over the next three days. The days were brutal. I was first and only pick for the school in Mongolia. The superintendent came for me.

The school in Mt.Kiara turned out to be two long interviews (over an hour each) but the position was dependent on a teaching couple to make up their mind.

Phnom Penh and Mr.Kiara were the most brutal, long, knock down, drag out interviews I have EVER had. Both superintendents grilled me. Rob Mockrish, the Superintendent from Cambodia was the most intense. He put me under an intense microscope about teaching philosophy, educational issues, methods, and most of all: why was I only in Egypt for one year if my contract was for two years?

He called my references in Egypt and Kuwait and put THEM to the grind to find out if I was for real. This guy isn't playing around. I was brutally honest with him about Egypt, shot out a lot of questions about Cambodia, and stayed in constant contact with him.

I didn't sleep well the final night of the fair. Rob told me to call back on the last day. Mongolia was a shoe in, but I was holding out for the better jobs. Kuala Lumpur went over a contract with me but he wouldn't offer until next week. (cont...)

## MOST WANTED LIST

**1. Teaching couples are most sought after. A school can fill two positions, arrange for one home, set up joint insurance, and rest assured a couple will be less likely to break two contracts.**

**2. Singles with International Teaching Experience, minimum a masters, and NO dependents.**

**3. Singles with non-teaching spouse or dependents.**

**\*not to mention everything depends on your resume'**

There were about 900 positions for 300 applicants. Over a hundred Countries were represented. At any given time, I was sitting with or talking to teachers from all over the globe.

We were all there for one reason: landing a position with a great school.

Stiff competition, high tension, all excitement, all in a few days! I live for



**Look for 2 new websites soon!**

-St.Somewhere reborn  
&  
-International Teacher Resource Exclusive (www.ITRE.US) - a new site for int'l teachers

Job Fair Continued...

The very last day, I called up to Rob's room. Everyone was packing up. The school reps were all leaving for the next job fair in Europe. I had decided to hold out for Mt. Kiara and say no to Mongolia. The quality of life was just too dismal in Mongolia. Anyway, Rob told me to come up to the room. Both of his principals were there and he apologized for grilling me so harshly. (he has two girls at the school and he only wants the best quality teachers) Rob offered me the position to teach a split 4-5 mainstream class which is PYP.

They went through the contract with me, showed me pictures on the computer, and welcomed me to the class of 2007 when I accepted. Whew. I signed up for the next two years with a feeling that it will be longer. It is really a top end school. I thoroughly researched it, poured over the contract, and feel great about my decision. Time and experience will tell.

In the end, it all came down to three IB schools which are very difficult to get into as a single elementary teacher with my limited experience. August 1st is right around the corner.

## All in a few days. Tension and Excitement that makes or breaks you.

I saw a woman break down crying in the lobby. I saw couples destroyed by the news that they weren't accepted because one of them wasn't a certified teacher. I talked to a music teacher that secured a position within the first 30 minutes of the fair.

I heard stories of how some of the superintendents at the fair secured jobs FOR their exiting teachers. That is how Rob, my new boss works. When I prove myself and make it so the school doesn't want to lose me, Rob will be the first to get me into my next desired position. I watched him do it this time for a few of his outgoing teachers.

Teachers were partying with their new/future

bosses, getting to know their new/future colleagues, and other teachers were wandering around the entire week without hope.

Teaching couples held off on their decisions. Deals were made. Recruiters were up all night calling references. Everyone had their A-game attire on.

My favorite part of it all was the networking. I met people from ALL OVER the world.

Better yet, there were perhaps 12 friends of mine there from Egypt. We would regularly meet in the lobby between interviews and compare notes on

schools, support each other before a tough interview, and meet later for a beer or twenty.

Those of you from Egypt, that are reading this, it was so great to see you. I say that genuinely. You were the best part of teaching in Egypt. I will try to keep up with most of you somehow. Many of you are traveling all over. We will have to keep comparing notes, share stories, and help each other out.

We will meet again at a job fair. This is the smallest school district in the world. globe. -Greg Lemoine



**Thank you for reading St.Sometimes. I hope you find it interesting. If not, then go read a book! At least you will be reading.**