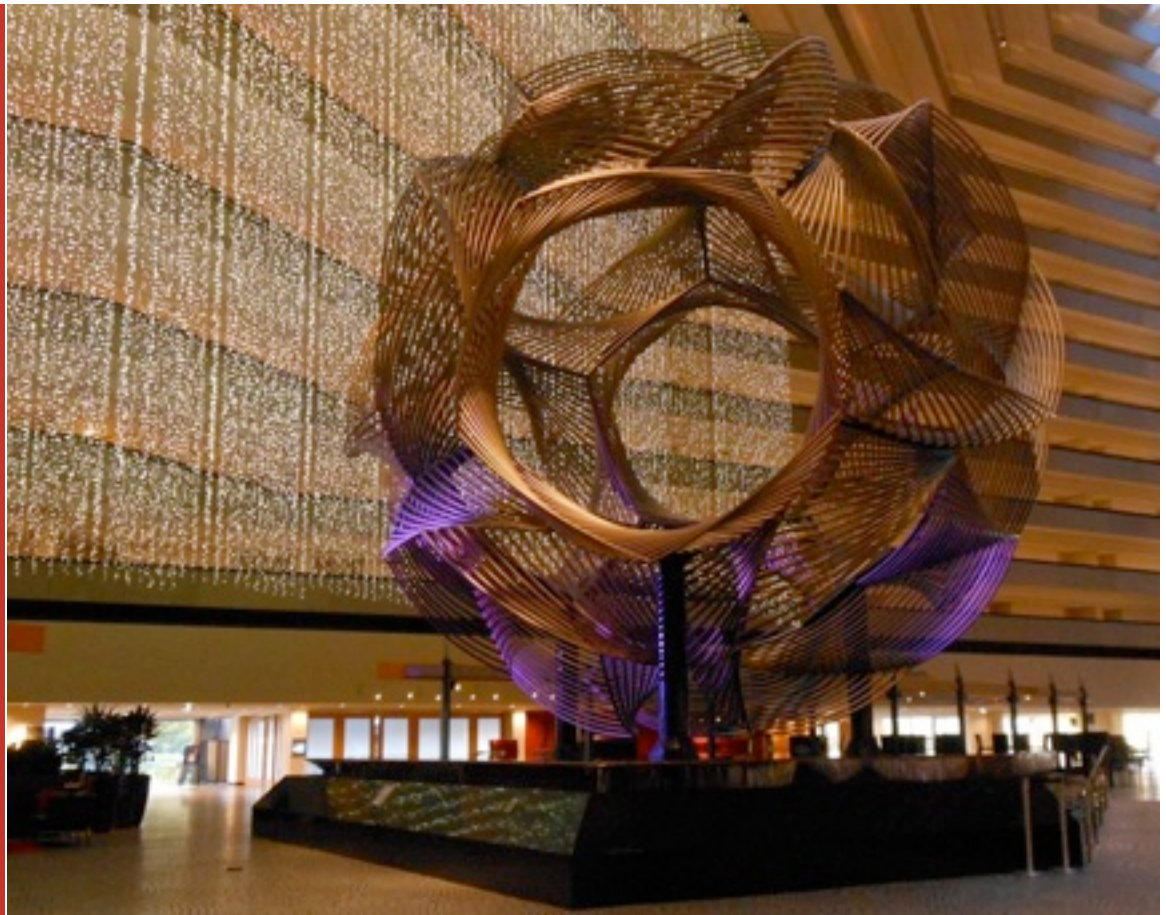


ST.SOME RECRUITING TIMES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

The Hilton Grand in Union Square, San Francisco, California.

What a majestic hotel lobby. I couldn't help but stare up at the strings of lights in this lobby.



The San Francisco Recruiting Fair International Schools Services

By Guess Who?

A lot of people have asked me over the years, "How do you decide where to live and teach?" This newsletter should shed some light on the process of how I land my jobs around the world.

Keep in mind, I have been doing this for a long time - since 2000. There are a lot of job fairs aimed at international teachers throughout the world.

AASSA, UNI, CIS, NAIS, Search Associates, ISS, Queens University, and TESOL are all great search terms for anyone to start looking. You can also get started with TIEonline.com but they don't have a conference. You will get a better idea of schools

and jobs out there. It only costs \$30US for an annual subscription. But let's look at the job fair I just went to: the ISS San Francisco IRC (International Recruitment Center).

This was my fifth job fair and my second ISS fair. It was held over a four day period of Feb 10-14 at the Hilton Grand. I paid \$200 for a membership back in early September and went through a lengthy process of uploading my resumé, letters of recommendation, teaching credentials, a teaching philosophy, a history of my teaching experience, and a video. The video was priceless!

Along with the \$200 membership, candidates are allowed to participate in any or all of the ISS Fairs around the world. The Bangkok fair in December is mainly for teaching couples. The summer one in Philly is too late. The February fair, their largest fair, bounces back and forth between Boston and San Francisco each year. This year was in San Francisco.

I was prepared for the job fair in September. Tickets were purchased. Ski (my buddy who was also looking for a job) and I found a cheap hotel near Chinatown. We were both ready. We thought we were ready!



“San Francisco is one of the great cultural plateaus in the world....one of the really urbane communities in the United States...one of the truly cosmopolitan places – and for many, many years, it has always had a warm welcome for human beings from all over the world.”

Duke Ellington



San Francisco, California

Try to Find a Dry Cleaner on Saturday, I Double Dare You!

Eric (Ski) Grochowski and I are seasoned travelers. We did NOT expect to get to the airport in Caracas at 4am and wait for 3 hours in line to find out we had tickets but no seats on the plane! It happened. But after a very EVIL look and some nice Venezuelan volunteers to stay behind, Ski and I boarded the flight. Everything went smooth. Our bags made it. We even had a few beers in Houston while waiting for our connection.

We arrived in San Francisco at our tiny hotel room on a Saturday night. The fair did not officially start until Monday morning so we indeed went out for a steak dinner at a local Irish Pub around the corner. There must be a thousand restaurants on each block of San Francisco! Ski wanted to tie one on at the bar because we had plenty of time. I was a total slug because here we were, getting ready to decide on the minimum next two years of our lives!

The next morning, Sunday (countdown minus 1 day), Ski and I met up in the Starbucks to answer emails from schools.

Ski set up an interview with one of his top picks for later in the evening. I had only heard from the school in Jordan. After about two hours composing and clicking for information on the ISS website, we started a search for a dry cleaner. Both of us had interview suits and shirts that needed to be pressed.

We called around. Searched the internet. Found one. Got in a taxi. Paid him 45 dollars just to drive us to the closed dry cleaners and hunt around a bit for a different one. No luck. We were totally screwed. Our stuff looked all wrinkly. After going back to the hotel room, we did some more calling. Ski found one guy open. Taxi again. Success! We organized it so everything would be done by Monday midday. Everything started Monday night. We each had one suit ready. Now we were set for the fair.

Ski went off to his first interview. I went shopping for another suit coat backup and a pair of shoes. Not too shabby! I even found Allen Edmund shoes! Monday was hours away!

Let the Fair Begin! Monday Day 1

I cannot tell you what a roller coaster of feelings an international job fair really is. It's just incredible. Think of it this way, you have put many hours into researching schools. You have put a lot of energy into your CV and maybe a digital portfolio. You probably have communicated with several directors and personnel at your top choice schools. You have been absorbing the mass of updated information on the ISS website every chance you've had for the past month (or months). The positions you are looking at open and close at different schools all the time. Why, because the directors just finished interviewing at a minimum of two fairs last week. Face it. The fair just cannot start soon enough at this point.

I came to this job fair from Venezuela already having two interviews via Skype. The first position was at a school in Dresden. I received an email from them this morning saying "Sorry, we have filled our position. Thank you for applying." The other interview was with Larry at a school in Oman, Jordan. Larry wanted to hire me before the fair and not have to travel to San Fran, but I didn't give him the chance to make an offer. I told him I was going to the fair and I would keep him "in the loop" during the entire process.

So Monday. Ski and I walked to the hotel to check in. ISS had made a lobby room into the main ISS office. Each candidate has a hanging folder in



alphabetical order by last name. Each of the schools had a hanging folder too. This is basically a candidate's mailbox at the job fair. Ski and I both checked in and went right for our mailboxes. The idea: if a school is interested in you, THEY invite YOU to sign up for an interview during the interview sign up. If THEY invite YOU, there are special privileges.

I had a note to meet with Larry (Jordan) and a school in Dubai. This was tough. I was expecting a lot of invitations. The lack of invites took me back to the feelings I had back in 2000 at my first fair. But I kept telling myself, the

"And now, I am going to totally embarrass him if he is even here. You see, sometimes, candidates that have done this before don't go to this first part. So, is Greg Lemoine here in the audience? Where are you?"

Laura Light - ISS Fair Manager and so much more

process hadn't officially started. Some schools were still arriving. This was a day for schools to present slideshows and information sessions. Ski received several. He is a high school Math teacher and in a real sought after position.

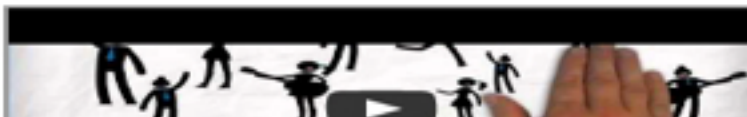
So we headed over to the "candidate pit" - what I call the lobby which is set up for candidates. Round tables are set up with lots of chairs. Four computers and a printer are set up for last minute CV printing. This is where the magic happens. This is where candidates meet each other, help each other, wait, get ready, send emails, cry, laugh, and ride the emotional roller coaster.

ISS VIDEO CONTEST WINNERS

On the behalf of the entire ISS educational staffing and leadership teams, we are pleased to announce the winners of our first candidate video contest. We know how important it has become to enhance your dossier in ways that really demonstrate ability as well as highlight your personality, achievements, roles and even personal style.

So, we had high hopes for these candidate videos and were not disappointed! Check out the winners below... Not only are they impressive for their presentation skills, but - as these creative works show - they are also really outstanding educators. We are proud to call these winners members of the ISS family, and thank them for their time and effort in creating such inspirational and informative entries!

First Place: Greg Lemoine



Celebrity Status From a Video Idea

Back in October 2012, I was in Caracas just before the Chavez elections. I was helping Ruben put together computers for a side business, staying at William's apartment, and playing with a new website called PowToons. It's an animation program.

I had a simple idea to spend the remaining five days of my trial period making a video to use for recruiting. In November, ISS announced a contest. I won \$500 and my video was featured on the ISS main webpage! How cool!

Speed Dating With a Two Year Marriage Commitment!



I spent almost the entire day in the “pit” talking to candidates. Almost anyone I talked to said, “Hey, you’re that video guy! I loved your video!”

Most of the candidates I met during this first day were new to the field. I helped answer a lot of questions about different countries, the process of interviewing (which would start tomorrow morning), and generally just helped calm many people down. All of us were nervous for what was to come.

So the dry cleaner called to say our stuff was ready. We jumped in a cab and asked the guy to wait for us. When we got inside, the Johnny guy tells us some things are missing. All of my shirts and one of Skis. I got my Mandarin suit, but the only shirt I still had that went with it wasn’t there. (My housekeeper must have ruined and thrown away my other custom made shirt.) This was not good. To top it off, when we got outside, the cabbie had left. Without being paid! Who’s ever heard of that happening.

The Panel of Directors

Ski had another interview and we decided to go see some of the School Presentations. Each school had a posted 1/2 hour to present to a small audience. Rooms were set up downstairs. I talked Ski into listening to the Anglo American School of Moscow. (I wanted to give some chocolates to the director so he could, in turn, give them to Paul Mooney when the director got back to Moscow.) What an impressive school. They didn’t have a position open in technology or math.

A little later, one of the last schools to present on Monday was the Shanghai American School - SAS - which was the top pick for Ski. (His original top pick was the International School of Japan, but they had closed the position.) The SAS director and his team of Admin (5) presented for a huge audience. It is a big school and they had lots of positions posted. After it was over, Ski stayed back to talk with the director. I hustled up to my “mailbox” to see if I had received any invitations. Wallah! I indeed was invited to interview with SFS (Seoul Foreign School) my number 1 pick and a school in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe wasn’t even on my radar, but now I could plan my way through the tables better. Now I had interest from my number one pick.

Ski met me up near the “mailboxes” and we headed down to the first main event of the fair: the introduction panel. The room was packed with candidates. Most of them were there. At the front of the room was a stage with a panel of directors and a podium, where Laura Light was starting off the festivities.

She started by explaining what would happen tomorrow. At 8am the tables would be set up in the basement assembly room. Recruiters would be at the tables to set up interview times (30 minutes on average) for the next few days. The schools would be Alphabetically arranged by country according to the map in our candidate packets. Candidates can stand in any line but should first go to schools that have given them an invitation. **(If there is a line, a candidate with an invitation from the school should jump to the front of the line.)** The process would go on for two hours from 8-10am. It was made clear that candidates should be on time for interviews and schedule enough travel time between interviews. The interviews are conducted in the hotel rooms. Yes, in the rooms. There are chairs outside of each room. If you are on time, you can politely knock to let the director know you are there on time.

You can expect two or three interviews before a contract is offered. Some may request a Skype interview. Don’t feel pressured to sign right away.

Then Laura reviewed the rules of the fair and explained the directors had heard a similar speech. Some of them are: verbal agreements are binding, schools can only make one offer at a time for any given position, let other schools know immediately if you sign a contract, and this is not like the USA - any questions can/will be asked!

What I didn’t expect at this fair was what happened next: Laura went through the new technologies that ISS was engaging and offering to candidates. She explained some of the new interviewing methods, Skyping interviews, and the video contest. Ski and I were sitting in the back so when she mentioned my name it was quite amusing to see everyone looking around.

Laura introduced the panel of directors from all parts of the world. “And now, I am going to totally embarrass him if he is even here. You see, sometimes, candidates that have done this before don’t go to this first part. So, is Greg Lemoine here in the audience? Where are you?” I stood up and waved like a celebrity. But I wasn’t embarrassed, until my video was played. The techie in the back of the room started it on cue, but he was texting on his phone and the volume was off. I was yelling at him “Volume! Volume!”. Once he DID turn up the volume my horror continued as the video was cut up and staggered. They were streaming it! Damn! It was stopped half way through and Laura apologized. I was in shock!

Anyway, the evening continued with each speaker, each a director at a different school around the world, giving general advice and answering questions from the audience. When one of the panel directors asked for a show of hands to see how many candidates were here for their first International Job Fair, about 80 percent of the 500 candidates raised their hands. Ski and I just couldn’t believe it.

We walked back the mile to our hotel and dropped off our stuff. There was a little Thai restaurant down the road so I traveled back into some memories of Thailand as I ate my Pad Thai and drank a few Singha beers. It was still early but I wanted to check my email for invites and get to bed. Still no invites! Man, was I nervous that this might be a terrible fair for me. Ski already had several schools interested. I had Jordan and Korea.

Moo, Moo! The Cattle Drive Tuesday Day 2

I woke up around 4:30am. Too nervous about the day to come. The time in Venezuela was actually 9am and I still hadn't emailed the lesson plans for the day to Ruben. I quickly dressed in my only suit again and set up my computer in the little lobby. After emailing the lesson plans out, I got a fresh cup of lobby coffee and found a surprise in my personal gmail inbox!

A school in Switzerland had emailed me during the night. They were interested. Now I was invited to four different interviews. I called mom and waited for Ski while I had two or three Chai Lattes at Starbucks around the corner at 6am.

After Chai Lattes, Ski and I taxied it to the Hotel lobby ready with our A-games. This was the start of the crazy period. The nervousness was palpable. Candidates were milling around the lobby, in and out of the "pit, and already heading downstairs to line up like cattle.

"Remember, this was my fifth international teacher recruiting fair. This account is a personal reflection with a lot of general details. It's not always this smooth."

Ski and I made a last check in our mailboxes for invites and I spent a little time going over my sign-up plan. Since I had four invites, I had to go immediately to the four and set times for

interviews. My plan of attack was Switzerland, Korea, Zimbabwe, Dubai, Hanoi, and Vietnam. I looked at my paper map to find out where the directors would be sitting. Even though it would be alpha by country, I had not been in the room before. With over 400 candidates lining up at over 100 schools you have to have a plan.

Ski and I headed downstairs around 7:30 to line up for the doors to open at 8am. This was the cut throat part of the entire job fair. It always is. You will always see long lines in front of the top paying schools, the Western European schools, and the Caribbean schools. Why, because many of the candidates see international teaching as a vacation. I spent the whole time in line talking with candidates around me. A lot of them initiated the conversations because they recognized me from my video. Others I initiated just to pass time and to satisfy my deep curiosity.

Laura was watching the entire process like a traffic cop and answering questions as candidates passed her and formed up

the 400+ winding line of candidates. (The only thing missing is the corral gates that cattle yards use to lineup and feed the cattle into processing rooms or trucks.) When Laura saw me she excitedly told me she had initiated my interview with Harare, Zimbabwe. She was very apologetic and made me promise to keep her in the loop as I went through the process today.

Right at 8am the line started to move. The doors had opened. By the time my part of the snaking line entered, the lines had already formed in front of the Caribbean schools and the European schools. I made my way around to Switzerland and came face to face with Michael, a guy my own age with a warm smile. I had skipped to the front of a small line. We simply shook hands. He checked his interview time list, asked me if 10:30am was OK for me, and confirmed his room number. We both wrote down the agreed time and I made note of his room number. (Just as a matter of reference, school administrators usually keep the first interview slots for the candidates that they send invites to. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if some directors tentatively plan out their whole morning for the most important tentative interviewees.)

The rest of my signup plan went smooth. I went to see Jordan last after I had arranged my other ones. We had talked the night before and agreed to do this. He was there for me, especially, and I had promised to be transparent throughout the process because I was still keeping Jordan as my number two after Korea.

Since my first interview wasn't until 10am (then 10:30, 11:00, 12:15, 1:30, 2:40) I had time to wander around and watch. I ended up in more conversations answering questions about "what to do" during the sign up chaos. What a scene. My mind jumped right back to 2000 in Iowa when I had done the same thing for the first time. That was why hanging out and helping other candidates seemed the appropriate thing to do with my spare time. (Thinking back, I should have rushed upstairs to the "Pit" and researched the Swiss school some more. I knew next to nothing about it and I was interviewing at 10:30).

Interviews! Job Fair Style!

There really is no way to prepare yourself for this style of interviewing. My new description is simply: Speed Dating with a Two Year Marriage Commitment.

Usually interviews are slated as a half hour. My first one with Switzerland was a little bit over. I found his room and knocked on the door. In just 40 minutes we had both asked questions, had a great conversation about the school and what we were looking for next year, and agreed to keep in contact via text or email for a follow-up interview later in the day.

This was a beautiful fly in my soup. I was totally blinded by them. No one from a European school had ever shown interest in me. Now, at a job fair where I was being courted by several schools for a semi-administrator technology position, this Swiss school was courting me for a fourth grade homeroom position. The key point of the offer is the fact this fourth grade was a pilot program started by a PhD Ed Tech fourth grade teacher that was returning to the USA for family. If the position was offered and I accepted, it would be my position to be an excellent 4th grade teacher that carried on the pilot program.

This was totally unexpected, but my heart rate was on overdrive. This was the situation I wanted to be in, a situation that offered me difficult choices.

I had made the mistake of scheduling my next interview at 11am and it was already 11:09. I was late for my first “Draft Pick, the Seoul Foreign School in South Korea! How stupid of me.

The elevators were busy. I had to get from the 2nd to the 16th floor - ten minutes ago. When one elevator finally dinged for going up, I got into an elevator with four people speaking some dialect of German. No, I am not superstitious, but when I asked where they were from, all of them smiled and said “Switzerland!” like a chorus. After they got out on the fourth floor, the dazzlement faded and my nerves elevated. This was the school number one on my list, a private semi-religious school in Seoul Korea. I had done a lot of research before the fair. Matt and Stacy had already interviewed with them in Iowa, two weeks before. This school already knew me.

This interview was vastly different.

Note: I am leaving out many details and names on purpose. The directors deserve their privacy. You should get the general feeling of the process.

The director had planned for an hour. He had a vast room overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge and a comfy couch for me to sit on. His calm demeanor made me immediately feel like I was in a session with a psychiatrist or a priest

at a rectory. (I’ve never been to a psychologist or psychiatrist but the situation promoted a feeling I have read about.)

This wasn’t a normal interview for me. This guy made me feel like an equal. We have both been overseas a long time and we kept going off track. By the time the hour was up and the next candidate was softly knocking on the door, we had barely scratched the surface. We talked a little about my faith (since the school is a Christian school) and a little about the technology position, but it was a conversation similar to two old friends seeing each other after going separate ways years ago.

We agreed to another time later in the day to continue.

Like I had told Switzerland, I told this director that SFS was a top choice of only a few schools I was interviewing with. He already knew that I would keep him in the loop. (By the way, this director is good friends with the Swiss director, knows the Jordan director, and had already talked with my current director.

Next on my list was a tag team recruiting pair from Dubai. The director and her HR administrator were the two most energetic people at the fair. Cindy Bass (back in the Warner Bros days) would have hired them in a heartbeat! They lost my interest completely when I found out their school was only national students - single nationality compared to other schools that are truly international. The final 10 minutes of the official interview was devoted to talking about Noah. The HR director is best friends with my friend Noah, whom I had taught with in

Honduras. I left a bit early so they could find a better candidate and not waste time for them.

After I left the energy twins, I went down to the “pit” and checked my email. This was about noon. The Swiss school had set up another interview with me, but it was a Skype interview with the Elementary principal through Skype.

I ran across the road to TacoBell, slammed a few tacos, and returned to the huge lobby to find a little nook to set up for my Skype interview. When I connected with him, he was already in bed with his head on a pillow. This was a first for me. Of course, at a job fair like this, it is important to move forward with someone that you really want. The director and the elementary principal had agreed I was important enough for a late night (Swiss time) interview. It went really well. We must have talked about 45 minutes to an hour about the school, job, expectations, and more. This was my second interview with the Swiss school because I had told the director this would be a quick fair for me. At the end of the first interview, the director had told me he would be treating me differently. Obviously he did.

The rest of the day went in the same motion. I interviewed with Zimbabwe and dropped in on the director from Jordan that was waiting to hear from me. Jordan gave me a written, formal contract offer. It was my first one and I still had second or third interviews scheduled so I agreed to make a decision by 11am the next morning. (One of my personal fair rules is to sleep on the decision. A two year commitment requires a full sleep cycle.) Now the real game was starting. With a timeline on a written formal offer, it makes the decision making more dynamic.

Until about 5:30 I had follow up interviews with Zimbabwe and Korea. I didn’t hear anything else from the Swiss school. I checked and rechecked emails, checked my mailbox, and kept talking through situations with other candidates.

One of the candidates I had gotten to know needed a place to take a shower and change clothes. The people she was staying with lived quite far away. So she, Ski and I went back to the hotel to freshen up for the “Social”.

The Social Evening of Day 2

The “Social” is simply a time to socialize with candidates and directors in an informal setting. The hotel grand lobby had a huge bar and some satellite bars set up around an hors d’oeuvres table.

Ski and I had just gotten our first of two beers when the director from a school in Egypt started talking to Ski. (Note: at a social like this, either limit yourself, or just don’t drink at all. Everyone is sizing up everyone else. I have seen several idiots embarrass directors that have just offered them a position.)

The funniest part of the Egyptian hiring crew talking to Ski was these people know Dolly, my long lost Egyptian roommate from my University days! What a small world. We were talking about Dolly when the Swiss director sidled up next to me and asked if I had gotten his emails. When I said “no”, he said “too bad because I offered you a position!” I thought he was joking. But he wasn’t. He was dead serious.

We must have spent at least two hours at the social. I spotted the Swiss director at the hors d'oeuvres table. We talked some more and I ran into some interesting situations.

Situations?

My favorite situation was one that reinforced my opinion that more than just a few candidates at these International Teaching Fairs think that getting an overseas contract is a vacation.

I was talking to the current Swiss director that had been overseas for several years, a real veteran of the overseas scenario. As we were talking, another candidate came over to introduce her friend that was looking at the Swiss school. Now imagine, the woman introducing her friend was eager to talk specifically with the director. She started praising the school and foraged into her story. The director and I, and a few others, listened to the ultimate vacation story: The candidate came to the job fair for two schools. Her two kids, one middle and one high school, had chosen Switzerland and Greece as the two geographical choices for their mom to apply for. She detailed some of her work history and how interested she was in traveling with her kids. She touted to all of us listening that she knew everything about the schools here from those two countries.

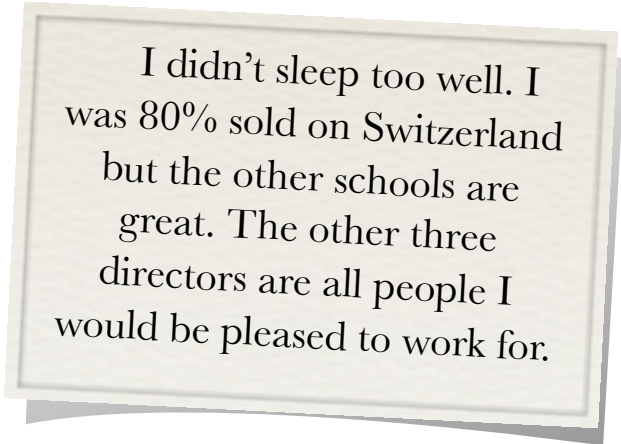
The director made offered an excellent question for her: "Have you considered a few other countries that you didn't consider before coming to the fair? It looks like you have really narrowed your choices down to some very sought after schools." I was going through a ton of comments in my head but I could only listen. My first thought was: here is a single mother of two (meaning 2 dependents) with no overseas experience that is just looking at a two year hiatus/vacation for herself and her kids. I'm glad I didn't say anything. The director had handled it perfectly.

The second situation happened while I was talking to one of the directors that I been interviewing with. He was updating me on the situation from his schools point of view. His school head (he was a deputy director) was en route to the fair from the Cambridge fair. Therefore, it would not be until tomorrow morning that I could have my third interview. He was in the middle of telling me how I was the top candidate when another director came to my other side. Both of the directors knew each other. The new arrival apologized for interrupting and asked to talk with me when I was finished. He hadn't seen whom I was talking with, specifically. (it was truly crowded)

Since the original director and I were talking "business" it was inappropriate for the other director to but in. It was certainly a mistake. They have some unwritten rules that directors abide by. This was one of them. Of course, after I finished talking with the first director, I sought out the other one. After apologizing again for interrupting, he gave me the same kind of update on where I sat with his school. We agreed to talk again for a third interview in the morning and "keep in touch".

Ski and I regrouped and we roamed around for a second beer. There were no more "situations". We were just treated to some really entertaining stories about living overseas in different countries. I could have stayed there another four hours

just sharing stories, but Ski and I needed to eat dinner. The evil side of me was disappointed that no idiot candidate was fool enough to get drunk and make a fool of themselves at the social. Of course, before we left the hotel, we had to check our "mailboxes" for communications. There was nothing for me. All of my options were on the table. I had two formal offers to sleep on and two more great schools wanting third interviews as soon as they could arrange it in the morning. Ski was another story.



I didn't sleep too well. I was 80% sold on Switzerland but the other schools are great. The other three directors are all people I would be pleased to work for.

I didn't sleep too well. I was 80% sold on Switzerland but the other schools are great. The other three directors are all people I would be pleased to work for. My decision process was ultra-dynamic by the end of the social. What was I going to do? Say yes to Jordan because Larry was so cool and the school is awesome (Middle East again - but Jordan is definitely different) or Yes to the Swiss school because the school is awesome - get back into the classroom AND do tech - and the director is great - and it is Europe? Or do I say no to both of them and continue the possibility of Korea (3rd interview in the morning then decide on the other two) or go way off the grid and look more into Zimbabwe? Sleep did not come easily.

I woke up around 5am and Ski was restless in his bed. Since he was awake, he started walking through my dilemma with me. He walked me through the pros and cons of each school and where I was with each interview process. By the end of it, I picked Switzerland. Besides the complications of where I was with the interviewing (not even knowing -for sure- about Zimbabwe or Korea), all of the schools were pretty even for package, great director, and solid school reputation. For once in my life the lifestyle won out. I have never made it into the European scenario before. This was a chance to move to one of the first of the first world countries. The opportunity to work in the classroom again was key. Once I work at TASIS for a while, maybe a tech position will open up and I'll be moved into the tech department. That is bound to happen. And if it doesn't, it shouldn't really matter. I will be the key player to get the fourth grade iPad pilot program working. The stage is set.

I met ski an hour later at Starbucks. It was time to get back to the show. Interviewing was starting up again and I officially had until 11am to decide on Jordan. The third interview (a yes or no for Switzerland) was scheduled for 9am and I still had to check and see whether Zimbabwe or Korea had left messages for me to move forward with their interviews. The Chai lattes



(Left) Back in 1970 was the first time I was in San Francisco. Dad, Mom, Jeff, and I moved from San Francisco to Germany.

(Below) 1970 San Francisco was also where I celebrated my first Birthday.

(Both) My trip to San Fran triggered my mom's memories. She sent me a lot of these pictures via her iPhone.



Switzerland it is! What happens after the decision?

I made my decision and went up to the director's room to sign a contract. Starting in August, my next home is in Lugano, Switzerland. It was a short and sweet meeting. The director answered a few more questions before I signed on and a handshake later I was headed directly to see the director from Jordan. It was my promise to keep him up-to-date on my decisions.

He wasn't happy, but I think he was prepared for my decision. He knew every step I had taken and I think he appreciated my loyalty. I'll never really know.

I didn't stop there. The director from Korea was a little disappointed but he wasn't surprised. He still hadn't connected with the Head of School about me. We must have sat there and talked for another hour and a half before another interview knocked on his door. He was happy for me and wished me well.

My final in-person stop was the Zimbabwe room. It was the same situation as Korea.

I don't know if the other candidates go in-person to let directors know about their decisions. I think some, even veteran candidates, just write Thank you notes and drop them in the mailboxes once they sign on with another school. It was different for me. These directors had done their research on me and connected with my references. Each of them had given me several interview slots. It was a pleasure to talk to all three of them. To me it was just appropriate to let them know in person that I had signed on with Switzerland and they could refocus on other candidates. I look forward to working for each of them in the future. It's a small world and surely we will run into each other again - hopefully at the right time.

Some of these directors put so much time and energy into recruiting what they call the "right fit" for a position. It is a big investment for their school and for them individually.

Once I had let the directors know my situation, I ran down to the "pit" and silently celebrated while writing personal Thank You notes to each of them.

Another Situation Ski's Third International Position

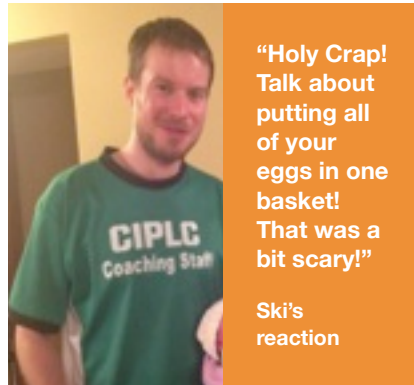
It must have been about noon by the time I was finished with writing Thank you notes, dropping them in the school mailboxes (anyone that I interviewed with received one), and finished my first celebratory Chai latte across the street at Starbucks. What a rush. After finishing such a decision process and getting the school you want, it is difficult NOT to scream out loud and do the “party dance”. But you have to be conscious of the other candidates that are still in the middle of it.

I quietly went into the “pit” to look for Ski. A few familiar faces were sitting around the tables in varying stages of interviewing. Some I talked with quietly had signed contracts. Others were almost in tears or chewing their fingernails. This part of the fair depends on the decision makers.

Since a director can only make one offer for a position, they have to wait for an answer. If the answer is no, then they simply continue down their list of candidates. It was for this exact reason that I went right to the other directors to tell them my decision. The other candidates are waiting to have another interview.

Ski came into the “pit” a few minutes later. His number one school was a big school, SAS (Shanghai American School). They had five different people interviewing for a slew of positions. He had already interviewed twice - once with

the director and once with the High School principal. When I asked what was going on he just looked at me and said: “Holy Crap! Talk about putting all of your eggs in one basket!” He was a



bundle of nerves, to say the least. Ski's situation was centered around his number one pick and his number two. The number two pick had already made him an offer yesterday. He had agreed to make a decision by noon so they could move on if he declined their offer. The problem was his number one pick looked promising - he had a good feeling they were going to ask him for a third interview - but he hadn't heard from them by noon.

Ski had basically made the decision to go for SAS. We knew from talking with other candidates that there were not a lot of candidates for high school math at this fair. The fact that SAS had not invited him to a third interview was probably because they had lines of interviews for other positions. Ski had a really good feeling that he was their top choice.

Ski Hits Jackpot with only one basket!

It turns out Ski was the number one pick for the High School math position. He had made the right call. Indeed, the director and his team of admin were working on a plethora of positions for their school of over 2,000 students. It took them a while to meet as a team about Ski and write up the contract.

He went through the same process of writing Thank you letters and dropping them in the hanging folders. It was obvious he had just made the slam dunk. SAS is a top tier school.

Remember, about ninety percent of the candidates were new to international teaching. Ski has been in VZ for three years and he was teaching in Korea for five years before that. (I mean this guy has an outstanding resumé!)

The fact was that he had no other offers on the table. Now it was more than half way through Day 2 of interviewing. If China did not offer him a position, he was most likely going back to Venezuela without a job in hand. He had spent a lot of money, emotion, and energy on this. But he was hanging in there like a true 49ers fan. (He really is a 49er fan.)

If my memory serves me right, around 3 o'clock the director of SAS came looking for Ski. Ski just gave me a look, left his iPad and assorted stuff on the table, and took off for one of the SAS hotel rooms. This was it. It could have been another interview, a “sorry but we have filled your position”, or an offer.

Meanwhile, I left all of our stuff with another watchful friend and went for a much needed bathroom break. An older guy (6'5") struck up a conversation with me because he recognized me as “that video guy”. He told me a great story, as we washed up and headed out the door, about how he had left the school in Poland to return to the states and marry his wife. We got back to the table and his wife took one look at me and said “YOU'RE THE ONE THAT STOLE THE SWISS JOB FROM US!” I am not kidding. But she said it with a laugh. This was a great married couple. He is a 4th grade teacher and she is retired. We promised to keep in touch. Ski still wasn't back!

It was late in the day. One by one, more and more of the candidates we had been hanging out with in the “pit” were signing on with schools. Out of respect for candidates still in the nerve game, we made a beeline for the interior lobby bar to share “war stories”. Everyone had stories to tell like Ski and I. We had about ten different people going to ten different parts of the world and one or two that were accepting the fact they would be heading home without a new job. And so it goes.

I lost track of the cool couple (whom I had robbed the Swiss job from) but Ski's mom arrived. Time for a steak.



Ski and his Mom

Ski's mom had a conference in San Francisco too. It was at a different hotel, but we managed to spend a little time touring the city. What a great lady! She's a school Administrator.

That is an ISS Fair Here are a few final thoughts...

Did you make it through this entire diatribe? Maybe some of these anecdotes will make it into my book.

I still cannot believe how small my world is. Someone knew Dolly in Cairo. Dolly is a long lost friend and former roommate from College days. Someone knew Mario in Morocco. Mario is a fantastic friend from both Kuwait and Honduras. Another person knew Noah Spalding and his wife in Dubai. I knew Noah in Honduras. And another woman we met is still good friends with Marcelo and Leticia from Bolivia. Marcelo and his wife, Leti, teach with me down in Venezuela - Marcelo is a key person in our tech team.

Most importantly, I found out the new director in Switzerland is Dr.Skipper. The TASIS director that I interviewed with is leaving. Dr.Skipper is the incoming director that is currently in El Salvador. My research into the school - before the interviews - tuned me into the change and almost eliminated Switzerland from my choices. One of the most important factors in choosing a school - for me - is the director. I wouldn't normally accept a contract from a director that was on his way out. Before my second interview, I emailed Ron - director in Honduras and a dear friend - to find out more information. Ron gave me two thumbs up on Dr.Skipper. Ron is someone I trust thoroughly. (Ron better be right about "Skip" - as Ron calls him.)



Ski and I sat down to dinner in a little sushi restaurant near our hotel. Two women sat at the table next to us with ISS name tags on. One woman was from Bolivia. She knows our friend Marcelo.

The other woman (I forgot her name but she is pictured here with me) said she had flown in from Morocco. I asked if she knew Mario. With lightning speed, she turned to me and said "tell me how you know Mario!"

Meeting new candidates and helping to answer their questions is the other reason I love these International Job Fairs. Hopefully Laura will invite me to be on their panel some day. I'd love to help ISS out.

The entire fair is organized to the smallest details. ISS is going more and more digital to help with the "Speed Dating with a Two Year Marriage Contract" style. I look forward to seeing my buddy Joe Kiedinger offer ISS a social networking solution and introduce the international ME program. Imagine being a part of such a positive change for the international teaching profession!

Job Fairs are a unique experience. They are changing in many ways. This newsletter was written not only as my memoir, but also to detail a job fair experience for some of my family and friends. After 10 pages, I sit back amazed. There are so many more details and stories to share.

Don't ask me much about San Francisco. With the exception of the fair hotel and my hotel, I saw very little. Sure, a ride on a trolley, a sea food dinner, and Alcatraz. Other than that, Starbucks has some really yummy Chai latte. And Alcatraz - saw it. No big deal.

Upcoming Travels?

There is about two weeks of school between San Francisco and Argentina. I am headed to Buenos Aires for a teacher conference. There will be keynote speakers, school vendors, and lots of teachers giving workshops. My workshop is the same as my workshop presentation I did in Quito last year - Creating a Website in 30 minutes.

I fly down, spend five days, fly back to Venezuela, and then head to Ecuador.

It will soon be time to cross off Diving in the Galapagos (Ecuador) because I head there right after Argentina. Basically, I fly back from

Buenos Aires, change my luggage, meet up with the dive group, and fly right to Ecuador. (of course this means BA-Caracas-Barcelona-Caracas-Panama City-Ecuador all in two days.)

Summer is now unclear. We get done with school around June 7th. My big going away party - GoyoFest - will be on the 8th. (My boat and car have to be sold before that.) I have to prepare for the GRE test, set up classes with MSU, and decide what I am going to do for the summer. With no money coming in and half of my current salary next year, this will be a challenge - financially.

Next issue will cover Argentina and Galapagos. I cannot wait!



Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Bay

I didn't get to go inside on the tour, but I got to at least see it from afar.