

THE THAI THAT BINDS

ISB Network News

November 2017

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ISB
Network
Reunion
July 20-22
Nashville

It's a
Thai
Twang



The Early Bird registration fee for members/spouse has been extended through **DECEMBER 31**

Register and Win!

For every fully paid registration and hotel reservation (2 night minimum) already made, or made by December 31, your name will be entered into a drawing for a free night's stay at the Sheraton. Winner will be announced at the Saturday night banquet.

Included with all registrations:

- Friday night cocktail party
- Saturday BBQ lunch
- Saturday night banquet (dinner/dancing/entertainment)
- Sunday morning breakfast
- All those incidentals: liability insurance, room rentals, name badges, gift bags, archival shipping

Note: You must login with your user name and password in order for the shopping cart to identify you as a member. The fee for non-members is \$160. The fee for children is \$125. When you register for the reunion, you will see an option for the Thursday night Thai dinner (\$40)....which has 65 people signed up already!

<http://isbnetwork.com/reunions/>

November 2017

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ISB Network Board of Directors

We encourage you to reach out to them at any time!

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Both positions are open



Make your Sheraton City Music Hotel Reservation

FREE with all reservations:
wifi, waived resort fees, parking, airport transportation

Reunion block and rates good from July 17-23, 2018.

Phone: 888-627-7060

Mention Room Block: "ISB Network Reunion"

Online: [Room Reservations](#)

Rates: \$144.00/night single, double; \$154.00/night triple, \$164.00/night quad.

The FAQ is in place at: <http://isbnetwork.com/reunions/upcoming-reunion/reunion-faq/>

EARLY BIRD RATE!	Member	Non-Member
Alumni	\$150	\$160
Spouse/Guest	\$150	\$150
Children (12 and up)	\$125	\$125

JANUARY 1, 2018	Member	Non-Member
Alumni	\$170	\$180
Spouse/Guest	\$170	\$170
Children (12 and up)	\$145	\$145



Thai Tales

Reunion Stories from the Heart

Peggy French, 1971 Attended: 1965-1969

The first reunion that I attended was San Jose in 2014. I was so excited to see people I had not seen in over 40 years and to meet the people that I have become great friends with on facebook. My brother Bob French, class of 66 had gone to the 2012 Colorado reunion and texted me daily that it would be something I would totally enjoy. So I saved my money, shared a room with Susan Haralson and proceeded to have the time of my life. Everything was well planned out and I almost felt like I was back in Bangkok. The house games rocked and were so much fun. I spent quite a bit of time at the Shack as well as money and it was all worth it as I came home with some unique gifts and keepsakes. I found myself counting the days until the next one as I was leaving San Jose.

Started saving again and was so excited to find out we were headed to Daytona Beach in 2016. It was another fabulous venue right on the beach and once again the reunion committee outdid themselves with the Shack, house game, opening ceremonies, teen club and I totally forgot the Courtesy suites hosted by various classes. Roomed with Jameela Lanza, class of 67 and found that we had quite a bit in common. Not much sleep is gotten but you don't care because it goes by so fast that you are totally sad when you say goodbye to your friends for another 2 years. You would have to attend to understand the wonderful family and friends that you will cherish forever.



Now I am all ready to attend my third one in Nashville. My mom used to live there so I am a little familiar with the city. The great thing is that it is only a 9 hour drive from where I live in Michigan so I can save on air fare and will have a vehicle to get around. Nashville is a perfect city to host as it is easily accessible from so many states and within reasonable driving times. I will close in saying.. until you have attended one, you will never know the depth of the friendships due to the school that we all attended and the country that left us with so many memories. Please join us... If you have never been to one I would love to meet you.

Suzanne Cano Meeker, 1984 Attended 1972-1982

I attended two different High Schools, ISB (k-10) and the American School in Mexico City. In 2009, I joined Facebook when my Mexican classmates started a group page to gather everyone for our 25th high school reunion. I enjoyed catching up with people on social media, but I chose not to attend that reunion for several reasons. Fast forward a few years and I started keeping up with my ISB classmates and reading about the different ISB reunions. I was a “voyeur” for Virginia Beach, Denver, and San Jose. I just wasn’t sure if there were enough people I knew going, and if we would really



have anything in common any more. I am a working mom of two busy teenagers and any trip away from my family causes logistical drama.

When the reunion was in Denver, I seriously thought about going. I was actually in Denver a few times that year for work reasons. Then I was considering San Jose, but simply chickened out. I left Bangkok after 10th grade when I thought I was a socially awkward geek. Would anyone remember me, would I remember enough about other people?

The groundswell of 80's alumni continued to build on Facebook and I finally started my Reunion savings fund for Daytona Beach. I booked the hotel as soon as it was announced. I paid for the Reunion registration fees first and kept saving for flight and then hotel.



Daytona was a remarkable experience! I had persuaded (via the magic of FB) several close classmates to attend, so I knew there would be a nucleus of fun for myself. THEN, I met people who were in BKK at the same time, but I didn't know then. I met people who attended ISB long before (and after) my time there, but we were ALL instant friends because of our shared experiences. I had so much fun and no one really remembered my social awkwardness in the same way I had. And the Shack store brought back a flood of memories of the monthly "hill tribe" sales and fun shops around town.

I can't imagine missing another ISB Reunion! The leadership torch is also passing down to us "younger" alumni, so we need to get excited about keeping the energy going! My reunion savings plan started the day I returned home from Daytona, even though we had no idea where the next location would be. I am so lucky that I will be able to drive to Nashville, so I plan to "bank" any leftover savings for the 2020 reunion on the West Coast. Go Panthers!

Hal Kennedy, 1968 Attended: 1962-1967

It was the summer of 2005 and my sister called to tell me that she just became aware that "Bubbles" (like Cher and Madonna, no last name necessary) lived on her block in lower Manhattan. Bubbles and I eventually connected for dinner and we spent the evening reminiscing of our days in Bangkok. That is what got me to my first reunion in 2006.

I met Bubbles in 1962 when my family moved to Bangkok. Bubbles' dad, like mine, worked for United Nations, and we became good friends. We were in 6th grade then and five years later we both left Bangkok to finish our senior year in different parts of the world.



Hal with Garrett Miyake and Bubbles (Bhandari) Bott in 2005

During our dinner, Bubbles gave me a rundown on our classmates. I was particularly interested in finding information about a close mutual friend, Garrett Miyake. Garrett had left Bangkok in 1966 and I had lost contact with him. Bubbles told me that Garrett, who had attended a few reunions with her, was doing well and lived in Hawaii. Bubbles had his contact info and in short order we had him on the phone and started making plans for the next year's reunion in San Antonio.

Going to San Antonio in 2006 and connecting with Garrett, and so many other friends and classmates, was thrilling and brought back the special time I had living in Thailand and attending

ISB. Although it may have been 40 years since I had last seen my classmates, that didn't matter at all. Within minutes of arriving at the reunion hotel we were telling stories (mostly true!) of the precious days we spent in Bangkok.

Next year the class of 1968 will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Although I didn't actually graduate from ISB, the fact is, it is the school that I best identify with and cherish. I suspect I share that feeling with my fellow members of the class of 1968 and, indeed, all students who attended ISB.

Why do I attend these reunions? Simply because I love connecting with old friends and remembering a very special time in my life. The years I spent in Thailand contributed to who I am and reunions give me the opportunity to acknowledge that.

Because of business and family conflicts I have only attended two reunions but I will be in Nashville next summer celebrating with my ISB family including many members of the class of 1968.

Aron Medeiros, 1973 Attended: I didn't! Spouse of Cindy Hunt Leach, 1980

My first experience at an ISB Reunion was 2004 in St. Petersburg, FL and it was a memorable event. Not the fact the Hurricane Charlie chased us from one location to another, but the people I met in St. Pete and Orlando were relationships built for life. I have been to so many reunions since then, that many people think I went to ISB, when actually my wife, Cindy Hunt Leach, attended from 1974-1976.



Denver 2014 and the Coors tour: Aron Medeiros, Long Hoang 1983, John Ferree 1980, and Cindy Hunt Leach 1980.

I especially enjoy the Teen Club with the talented musicians that played together in bands back in their teen years. I can identify having played drums in a rock band when I was in High School. Shopping at The Shack is always cool too and I always seem to pick up a new item or two.

My favorite reunion to date was Virginia Beach due to the venue and the many friends made there. The Colorado reunion and the VIP tour of the Coors Brewery ranks up there too. The fantastic people I meet from all over the world is the reason I will continue to attend the ISB Reunion- and share a Singha with my friends.

Barbara Stilwell Snook, 1969 Attended 1965-1967

Attending the reunions every two years is a present I give to myself. As a military brat I moved from place to place growing up. Consequently, I never felt like I had a home. I attended ISB my freshman and sophomore years (1965-67), transplanted from Saigon.

ISB gave me lifelong friends that created that home and family for me. Bob and Meredith March and I put together a "unaffiliated" reunion in the mountains of Colorado in the summer of 1987. Since then I have tried not to miss a reunion. The "coming home feeling" is something I cannot explain to non ISBers, but is a feeling that sustains me, comforts me, and nourishes me on those "off years".

I walk into a room, and instantly feel like I am home. We rekindle friendships, share memories, but mostly I can just sit with those who have had a profound effect on my life...where I have been, who I am, and why I am so happy to be in their presence.



2010 Virginia Beach reunion. Judi Molthen 1967, Marit Melhuus 1967, Barbara Stilwell 1969, and Meredith March 1969



MY OLD SCHOOL



Submitted by: Peppy Doggett, 1968

While visiting Bangkok, Thailand in October I took a trip down memory lane to My Old School — The International School of Bangkok. When I went to this school for my high school years — 1965 to 1968, it was located on Soi Ruam Chai, number 15 Sukhumvit. Sukhumvit is the name of a major thoroughfare that originates in central Bangkok and then run east and south over 60 kilometers. The sois, or lanes that run perpendicular from Sukhumvit to the left and right have names but they are also numbered, with odd numbers on the outbound side (motorists drive on the left in Thailand) and even numbers on the inbound side.

Long ago the school moved out of town, to a new campus in Nonthaburi, Thailand, about 30 kilometers to the north. I wanted to see the old ISB campus which was taken over by the New International School of Thailand (NIST), now celebrating its 25th anniversary.

I set out on foot from my hotel on Soi 18, which is about a half-hour walk from the school, but I took a leisurely hour, soaking up the memories from the top of the soi on down. As I was on the inbound side of Sukhumvit I had to cross over to the other side. This used to be a matter of simply taking your life in your hands and negotiating the traffic rushing in both directions. Not anymore. Since my day an overhead light rail network called the Bangkok Transit System was constructed, and the BTS Sukhumvit line was built right down the center of what is now a divided Sukhumvit. To cross over one uses a pedestrian overpass found every other block or so, or where the BTS stations are.

I crossed over at Soi Asok, Sukhumvit soi 21 on the outbound side, over from soi 16 on the inbound side, through the Asok BTS station there. I then walked west, toward downtown looking for my memory lane. I would never have recognized it without this sign.

Under the sign, at the Sukhumvit end of the soi 15 Ruam Chai there was a noodle soup shop where I would often come after school to snack on khow phat or

“ha baht” soup — great food for about 25 cents back then. There is a noodle soup shop there now, though who knows if it is still in the family. I remember it bigger than it is now.

I turned down soi 15 toward the spot where my old school once stood, about a kilometer away. I remember the soi was always busy, and it still is. But I also remember it to be a bit wider and a lot less “tall” than it is now. Unlike today, back then vehicles coming and going passed each other with relative ease. Not anymore. And now high rises line both side of the soi. The incredible amount of high rise construction over the years explains both the narrowing and the “tallness”.

Not far from the top of the soi stands the Manhattan Hotel on the left, as it has for at least fifty years. There is now an apron in front where vehicles can pull up to the door. Another indication that the soi used to be wider.



Walking down the soi I reminisced about the food vendors that sold grilled chestnuts, plantains, skewered chicken and pork, and iced Thai coffee from their carts, pushing them up and down the

street. There is still street food to be found along this memory lane, but the vendors are stationary, arrayed with the hibachi's below large umbrellas and tarps held up with poles. Gone are the carts.



All up and down soi 15, the electrical wires hang all over themselves, as they do all over Bangkok. They cluster like nerve ganglia on the utility poles and drape down low sometimes, way low, between the

poles. These are images not in my memory. I was told by a local that the city has started to put these lines underground, but not on this street.



About one kilometer down the soi I caught my first glimpse of the buildings that were once the International School of Bangkok. The same building that housed the administrative offices was the first to be seen, almost identical to how it was, except that the stairs, where I first posed with classmates evacuated from Saigon in February 1965, were closed in to create more administrative office space. We had been classmates at the American Community High School in Saigon, but were evacuated to Bangkok as the War in Viet Nam heated up. The photo appears in the 1965 Erawan yearbook showing some of the nearly 60 students included in that influx. (Photo credit: 1965 ISB Erawan staff.)



From left to right (top row) Rick Naldrett, Robert Kater, Roger Brady, James Birk, Larry Doggett, Charles Bell (middle) Julia Birk, Andrea Stone, Margaret Verdies, Bill McCarthy, Caryl Jean Hansen, Stephanie Collier Sarah Black, Bathy Richardson, Virginia Ritchie (bottom row) Tiberio Lindgren, Charles Brady, Bill Nicholson, Ralph Doggett.



I approached the guards at the gate and asked if I could take some photographs. They said no. So I explained as best I could with my meager command of the Thai language, that I had lived in Bangkok 50 years ago and this is where I went to school. The guards hesitated, but then an administrator walked by and with my explanation escorted me to the administrative offices.



Back in the day there was a wider gate. Bigger buses of varying sizes and shapes plus an array of passenger cars passed through them. Students of NIST are now transported by a fleet of small buses seen here, all lined up in a row. You can also see flags of the

nationalities in attendance at NIST, at half mast in honor of the passing of the king. In my day while many nationalities were represented, about 90% of the students were Americans, many of them sons and daughters of military officers and staff engaged in the Viet Nam War.

I presented myself to the receptionist in the administration building and explained my history and that I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to look around and take some photographs. The receptionist arranged for me to receive a guided tour, led by Ms. Nandini ("Mini") Pavaphiphat, who is the school's Administrative Assistant and Alumni Manager. She escorted me all around the campus and up and down the stairs of what was the ISB high school building.



Today the old ISB high school is the NIST language center — 15 languages are taught. Where the old library was, there is now a conservatory. I remember well the main steps with the library on the left. The building, once all white, now has blue trim. The featured photo at the top of this blog post shows the high school building as it is today. The photo below, from the 1968 Erawan yearbook, shows the building as it was in 1968.



Looking across from those steps one used to see the big gym that served not just for sports but also for assemblies. The gym held the entire high school student body for those special events. In my last year there (1968) we had a mock political convention, mimicking the US Republican Party convention to be held in Miami later that year.

The gym was razed long ago, replaced with what is now the stylish creative arts building. The building has art class rooms, a shop class room, a culinary arts room and a lovely three story high atrium.



From between the old high school and the creative arts building looking inward, one sees the wide open space where the "sala" once stood. A Thai sala is a pavilion open on all sides. The ISB sala was a wonderful open air multipurpose area where we had art classes and a variety of group activities, including school dances. We also ate our brown bag lunches and snacks that we bought at the canteen there.



Photo credit, 1968 Erawan: Tom Wilks, Willis Bird, Charlie Hodgkins, Arnold Griffin.



The old ISB/NIST campus is encircled by high rise buildings, none of which was there in my day. The space where the sala was is now open space. On the far side of this are some basketball courts and beyond that the elementary school playground. The closer building on the left was built after ISB moved out. The one next to it further along was there in my day as can be seen in the photo of the sala. I remember visiting that building for college guidance counselling.

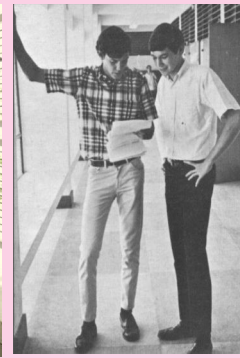
The exterior of the old canteen is little changed. The same window in the wall through which we bought milk, juice, sandwiches and sweets is still there, though the interior is much changed. In those days we bought chits to pay for food items. The eating facilities are much changed at NIST. They have a walk-up cafeteria next to a dining hall, as well as seating outside.



This is all in the building next to the old guidance counselling offices, in a space that was part of the open playing field. The playing field is still there, stretching back to the old klong (canal) that is just over the far fence with the blue covering, but it is much truncated, since in addition to the dining facility, the NIST high school building is on the left hand side of the field.



Toward the end of the tour Mini allowed me to visit inside what was the ISB high school building. For me this was the highlight of my visit as it brought back so many wonderful memories, especially since many of the hallways and stairways look much as they did in my day.



Note in particular the unchanged floor tiles in the photo on the left, one showing me during this 2017 visit and the other showing me and my student government colleague Reid Copeland in 1968 (Photo credit 1968 Era-wan).

An extended slide show of photos taken on this delightful trip down memory lane to My Old School is available at <http://villandio.net/?p=5859> . Click on any image to enlarge the image and begin a slide show with clicks on the buttons at the bottom center of the image.

Again a very special thank you to Ms. Nandini ("Mini") Pavaphiphat, the NIST Administrative Assistant and Alumni Manager, who graciously showed me around her wonderful school and my memories.



ISBN Membership Benefits Include:

- ♦ Discounted reunion registration
- ♦ Discounts when you shop The Shack
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