

Villa St. Jean International School
____ Creed: "The Whole Man" ____
"And now here is my secret ... it is only
with the heart that one can see rightly,
what is essential is invisible to the eye."
– Saint Ex.



The Villa St. Jean blog project

... an unsanctioned production of the Bossuet Material Support Committee



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Checking in with Humberto Adrianza ...

Posted on [01/02/2009](#) by [villastjean](#)

*This update was adapted from a note Humberto sent to his fellow students from the Villa, **class of 1969** and is reprinted with his permission.*

– the editors

Lot's of water past the bridge since we last communicated...ehhh... let me give you a brief run down of the last some 40 years!

Yes married, but divorced on the 30th year...! Two children, girl now 28, with grandson Santiago lives in Pasadena, California. My son 24, with granddaughter Amaia lives in Barcelona, Spain.

I'm living in Merida Venezuela... After working as a potter for 18 years...

This October began a new adventure with a friend to promote alternative energies in Latin America.

It has been a very rich and varied life...

As for the rest of the 69'ers little is known... These are times to weigh why we are here, and what legacy we will leave to our grandchildren.. "de toute son ame" ideals are still alive and ever present to make a difference...



[Humberto Adrianza](#)



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I don't even know who is still alive!!! 2009 marks a 40th anniversary and perhaps a good excuse to meet somewhere...

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The mind reels....

Posted on [12/17/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

As a classmate of [Anson Dorrance](#), I suppose I could have imagined him pursuing a career in sports. The committee recalls Anson as the most athletic member of the villa class of 1969, which – to be fair – is faint praise.

We would not have guessed, though, that his eldest daughter, Michelle, would be a tap-dancer. Nothing in Anson's personality pointed toward that end.

Her [elegant web site](#) was brought to our attention during a recent (and lengthy) e-mail thread .. it includes rave reviews from the New York Times and elsewhere.

And for grins, here's a very brief [youtube video of Michelle](#).



[Michelle and Nicholas trade](#)

And if we were to be entirely honest, you'd have to say that Ms. Dorrance's dancing prowess has no antecedent at the Villa. In our memory, those arranged dances with girl schools were weird awkward affairs, with absolutely none of the verve demonstrated above. What's more, they were in black and white.

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Boschert speaks!

Posted on [12/10/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

All:

The context for this is a bit complicated but we thought we'd pass along comments made by Cyril Boschert, who taught at the Villa 40 years ago as Brother Cyril and is fondly remembered by all those associated with this blog.

Mr. Boschert, [who has weighed in before](#), responded to an e-mail thread about remembering the villa.

We have elected to preserve his comments here as e-mail is so perishable. And we've appended a reply from Rex Harrison, vsj '68.

– **the editors**

Anybody remember the Saint Nicolas procession through town, with St Nick riding his white donkey while throwing out ginger breads, and the Pere Fouettard, the bogeyman, searching for the

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[Boschert](#)

kids who were not too good during the year?

I was there last night, along with thousands of others, despite the slight rain and chilling temperatures. We go often with our grandkids. The oldest is six so they are still impressed. One was particularly concerned because the Pere Fouettard looked at him a long time without saying anything.

He was greatly relieved when the bogeyman moved on.

I'm living in Versoix (just outside of Geneva) with my wife and our daughters and their families. I worked for thirty years at Collège du Léman, an old sports rival of VSJ. During some of those years I worked with Herve Frichot and Riccardo Laj who had also worked at the Villa. Anyone remember them.?

I also ran into Nabih Yammine about a year ago at a funeral. He also worked at the Villa in its last years. Werner Dobner came down from Germany this summer and spent some time with us. I know a lot of people remember him.

Keep up the memories.

Cyril Boschert (ex Brother Cyril)

—

Ex Bro. Cyril,

Of course I remember all of you. I've always remembered Bro. Dobner sharing his childhood memories of the Allied bombing of his hometown (Dusseldorf or Bremen) because it was an industrial city. Do you know his childhood hometown? Tell him I said hi, he was a great influence on me.

Sincerely, Eric(Rex) 68'

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Turning back the clock..

Posted on [12/06/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

What might you do differently if you could relive your youth and Villa years?

(First, the editors would have taken credit, in some fashion, for a blog in the future. And anticipated the recent market meltdown)

But **Michael Childs**, in a e-mail rumination, answered in this fashion:

—

Ah, if I only could be back there, 40 years ago. What would I do differently? What would I do the same? Looking back, I would definitely have skied harder and tried to climb more mountains. I would definitely have gone on more dates, if I could get them. I would have joined several of my classmates in the hotels along main street and

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learned about women earlier then it turned out. I would have told the seniors to stop beating up the Swiss after getting loaded on Cardinals.



[Milling students...](#)

But I still would have become a Cardinale, and I would have learned how never to become sick drinking alcohol. I would definitely have treated Mr. Jenerai (spelling?) with more respect. I would definitely have questioned religion more seriously. I might have tried to join the band as some kind of back up singer, but I'm sure they would not have wanted anything to do with me.

I might have tried to find a way to bulldoze Michael Bachman on the soccer field, which would have been impossible. I would have smoked a cigar in the Boswet library, and I would have told Tom Hanlon to stay out of cars, and Phillipe Echavaria to stop smoking Gauloise. I still would have listened to the Rolling Stones late at night in the library, and gone to their concert in Bern, and remembered Mick Jagger tossing out a bouquet of roses as he sang Ruby Tuesday. I would continue to look for wine cellars in the ski chalets, and I probably would have smoked marijuana if I could have found any, but I didn't even know what to look for.

I would have tried to be more blunt about some things, and more social about other things, and understood that everyone was just trying to get by in this world. I would still admire the authenticity of some of my teachers. They were all sincere in doing what they tried to do. And in all things I would have remembered how special each day was. I would have done it again. Easily.

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Fribourg, the music video...

Posted on [12/06/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

[This was](#) passed along to our gang from Mr. MacIntyre, who lived in Fribourg before the advent of YouTube and even music videos..



[FribourgVideo](#)

And [here's another](#), found by our research staff with, perhaps, even better city scenes.

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Mike Litton, 40 years after his vsj graduation...

Posted on [11/12/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

All:

Mr. Litton, class of 1968 class officer and now a confectioner-entrepreneur from California, recently visited classmate Steve MacIntyre in the badlands along the Nevada-Arizona border.

MacIntyre sends along this picture..



[Litton](#)

For more on Mr. Litton since Fribourg, here's a [San Francisco Chronicle story](#) that mentions his company's contribution to the city's art scene.

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The Swiss and the president-elect

Posted on [11/11/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

Brian Lawler, 1968 graduate of the Villa and [trans-Alpine runner](#), sends along [this link](#) detailing the reaction of the Swiss media to the election victory of Senator Obama.

The president-elect is 47, by the way, which means he was a first-grade student when Mr. Lawler received his degree from the Villa.



[SwissPapers](#)

In case the link expires, here's the lead:

"Historic" was the word often repeated in Switzerland's newspapers on Thursday to describe the election of Barack Obama as the United States' next president.

They were in agreement that Obama would help overcome racial discrimination in the US but there were words of caution in some of the commentaries.

"The whole world is counting on Obama" was the front-page headline in the tabloid

Blick, above a picture of the president-elect carrying a globe on his shoulders.

"What the people in the US saw – and everyone in the world – was something great and strong: Hope. Hope for a different, better world than one of war, lies and greed," Blick said in its commentary.

"The press are quick to use the word 'historic' when describing exceptional events," said the Bern-based Bund. "The term is not always appropriate but for this year's US presidential election one can speak of a milestone."

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A curious excerpt from Villa history...

Posted on [10/22/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

Thanks to the work of [Brian Hedges](#), villa student in the early '60s, we continue to learn more about the school's transformation from a French to American institution. Brian has uncovered and then translated some letters written to him years ago by a Villa instructor..

Here's merely an excerpt.

(The full contents are on his Villa site, in both French and English, [here.](#))

As to me, I sued the Villa St-Jean, a suit which was resolved on June 29th, the last day of the academic year, trying to recover the 1,500 francs that I had finally lost according to my contract. Well, I lost. You must find this quite absurd. On the one hand, in Fribourg everything is under the control of the cassock: everything, politics, commerce, and even justice. A priest has never lost a suit. What a brave idealist I was to attack the priests of Fribourg. But there is even better. The "Toad" and his gang helped justice to be blind. A marianist from Paris, whom I had never seen, came to swear before the judges that he had come to me with Anlauer-toad and that I had refused some work.

I couldn't contain my anger. The next morning, I still had my class of troisieme, from which you were absent: I then brought all of your classmates up to date on the situation, telling them what I just wrote you. Better! I accused the toad at loud and angry voice up and down the halls. Then I confronted the toad in his brand new office, office renovated with the funds stolen with perjured testimony.

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Remembering Scott Wilson, Fribourg 1967

Posted on [10/14/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

Our blog has received a request from the son of Scott Wilson, who attended the villa for a year — 1967-68, as a junior. Please send his son, [Jared](#) — or [us](#) — any pictures or even memories you might have of Scott.

– the editors

–

Jared Wilson writes: My father attended Villa St Jean for one year in 1967 as a Junior. He passed away 12 years ago. I have recently been trying to put together a scrape book of his life and came accross this blog. I was wondering if any of you had any photos or stories worth sharing about him. Anything would be appreciated.

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From French to English — new evidence!

Posted on [09/24/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

All:

Brian Hedges, a villa student in the early '60s when the school abandoned its French curriculum, has uncovered evidence that sheds light on the school's transformation.

Here's his tale:

I've come across some letters from Michel Terrapon which shed considerable light on the closing of the French Villa, and I've posted them on my blog and edited my discussion of the Wikipedia article.

It occurs to me that they also provide much of the explanation for the closing of the American Villa. The fact that the French Villa collapsed entirely (due to a very bad last director who among other things saved a few thousand dollars by cheating the lay teachers, all but one of whom departed, out of their contracts) meant that there was no long term institutional continuity or commitment when an entirely new (with the single exception of brother Moran) group of short-timers in a new institution encountered some tough times.

Given the circumstances of the French Villa's closure, it is ironic that Fribourg's offering a good price for the buildings and grounds has previously been offered as

part of the explanation for the closure of the American Villa.

It was the money again.



[From the soccer fields ...](#)

Regards,
Brian

Michel Terrapon was an artist and a teacher at the French Villa, and later assistant director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Fribourg. It suddenly occurred to me to look through the letters I had received from him, and I found the above.

(Note: The original letters, for our French-speaking colleagues, are on Brian's site [here.](#))

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