

100 YEARS
OF INSTITUT MONTANA

SARA RANDELL



Front cover: Entrance to Montana black and white photograph circa 1930,
colourised by Jarryd Lowder, 2026.

The gate and arching sign existed before Montana when the building was a hotel.
Montana simply changed the name on the sign.

The small sign on the right announces that free visits to the school were available at any time.
This was removed a few years after opening.

100 YEARS
OF INSTITUT MONTANA

We would like to express our thanks to Alexander Biner.

Thank you for:

The idea, in the first instance, of a book
by which to remember Montana's first 100 years
The determination to make it happen
The creative and intellectual freedom that you
allowed its creators
And yet your reliable and valuable support
along every step of the way

Thank you for allowing the story of Montana to tell itself, through its records and its voices, so that it could develop into an authentic history and serve, as history should, as a guide for the future.

Sara Randell and Jarryd Lowder

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FOREWORD

Montana did not set out to be an ordinary school.

Max Husmann built his school on the Zugerberg, a little paradise where lush meadows meet pine-scented forest. Later generations would call it their Zauberberg, their magic mountain. It was structured by ambitious ideas about education and built on big hopes. The result was an inspiring model of progressive education. It was also exuberant, certainly unusual, sometimes erratic, and utterly brilliant.

Elements of Husmann's vision were shaped by place and time. It was the 1920s, memories of war could still be visceral but Europe was recovering and aspirations for a bright future were strong. As the lens of history illuminates, there were new ideas and old conventions swirling around, not always in synchronisation. But Husmann built his school on a set of values that would stand the test of time and cemented with an approach that included potential for change and development as the years rolled on. Like a child, growing up. We are now at the beginning of the story of that 100 years. At this stage, the values on which Husmann built his school were barely articulated, let alone become a mantra.

Individualism, Internationalism, Integration

The first iteration of the three "I"s that we could find was when they were quoted by Husmann's successor, Director Josef Ostermayer, who attributed them, in his book on Montana's first 50 years, to the school's founder. Historically, there is no solid definition of what they mean but the history is going to help us with that. That they have been open to on going reevaluation is part of their strength.

A few of Husmann's words from when he spoke about the first unfolding of his educational project help explain what they meant to him.

The approach to learning and to personal development that would become quintessential Montana was explained by Husmann in a piece he wrote for the Swiss Observer published on the 16th of May, 1931:

You must not, indeed you cannot standardise in education. Individuality must be considered and deftly handled. Only in this way can school education be changed from the performance of tasks, irksome to youth, to an interesting course of adventure into the various fields of knowledge.

Montana set out with a concept of individualism that had complexity and depth. It was about far more than individual relations, it would shape the organisation of both the school and the curriculum. It ran counter to creeping standardisation and claimed the freedom to shape learning and school according to individual passions, to embark on an adventure.

From the same piece:

The education of youth, therefore, must imply the laying of a foundation of something which later life completes. School life and life in the world must not be cut off the one from the other, but be parts of one whole.

School was not merely the inculcation of curriculum based learning. It would be a place to grow into adulthood and a place in the world.

And from Husmann's keynote speech for Montana's 25th anniversary celebration in May 1951:

...True education for international understanding had to begin and work for the future of a better world. The friendships formed on the Zugerberg were to be firmly established, to last a lifetime and to transcend all borders.

The big idea, that all this education was for a greater good, was built into the school. Times would change and they would change the details about how Montana would carry out its mission. Time is still changing the details but the mission remains the same.

One hundred years have rolled on and it is an achievement of which to be proud. The schools that began 100 years ago were pioneers. Those that are still here made the journey partly through strategy, seasoned with luck, but also through commitment. People who believed so strongly that their school should continue into the future that they put massive effort into making that happen. What exactly is that commitment to? What drives "Montaners" (a word that is now almost 100 years old) to return to the Zugerberg for a "Homecoming", to mobilise to save the school or even to turn the pages of a long book all about Montana?

It is affection, it is loyalty seasoned with a healthy dose of pride. It is a feeling that, somehow, Montana can make the world a better place. It is something akin to love.









PART ONE
BEFORE MONTANA

THE ZUGERBERG

Let us start back in the middle of the 19th century. The little mountain overlooking Zug is a secluded haven of pre-alpine meadows. They provide grazing land for a few small farms dotted around the rolling hills. In the surrounding forest deer roam. Then tourism came to Switzerland, especially travellers from fast growing industrial hubs seeking fresh air and unspoilt landscapes. The Cure Hotel (called either Kurort or Kuranstalt) became a popular product offered by Swiss tourism of the era. Guests would come to take care of their health in some bucolic location away from the city and enjoy an array of curative activities. The Zugerberg, with its unpolluted air, its benign summer climate and its spring of fresh water, was ripe for exploitation. Its proximity to new travel connections by road and rail was an added bonus.



Kurort Felsenegg, circa 1854

The first hotel to be built was Felsenegg in 1852. The land was bought by Zug physician Michael Keiser-Moser who opened a Cure Hotel with his wife. Their enterprise failed and the partially finished building was sold for a mere 220 francs to Zug innkeeper Johann Peter Weiss. He finished the build and the hotel was ready to reopen in time for the 1854 tourist season. It was a grand, timber-framed building like in a fairy-tale, with stables and a dairy. A financial success, it was swiftly embellished with extensions and a decorative onion dome.



Advertisement for Felsenegg in 1901 offering curative treatments

Visitors came for a regime of cold spring water cures and local milk products taken every day at 6am and 6pm. Pretty paths encouraged guests to take gentle walks, there were gymnastics facilities along with the billiards and the croquet. A huge Belle-Epoque style north wing was added around 1869 and the southern extension with additional recreational activities was added in 1895, by which time there were 80 guest rooms with 125 beds.



Postcard depicting Felsenegg, circa 1900. The inset image on the left shows the footbridge which led to the grounds to the east.

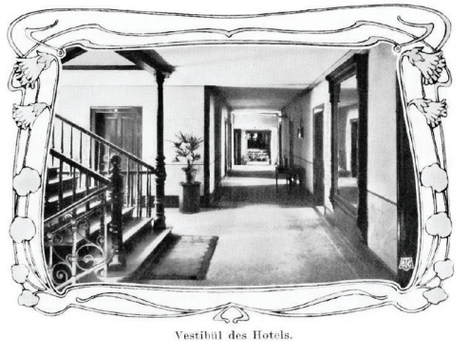


Felsenegg brochure cover and fold-out panoramic image, 1865



Left: In 1869, the second owner of Felsenegg, Johann Peter Weiss, decorated a recessed balcony with his family coat of arms. It can still be seen today at the northwest entrance to Felsenegg.


Ein Schlafzimmer.


Vestibül des Hotels.



Felsenegg brochure cover and interior photo illustrations, circa 1900

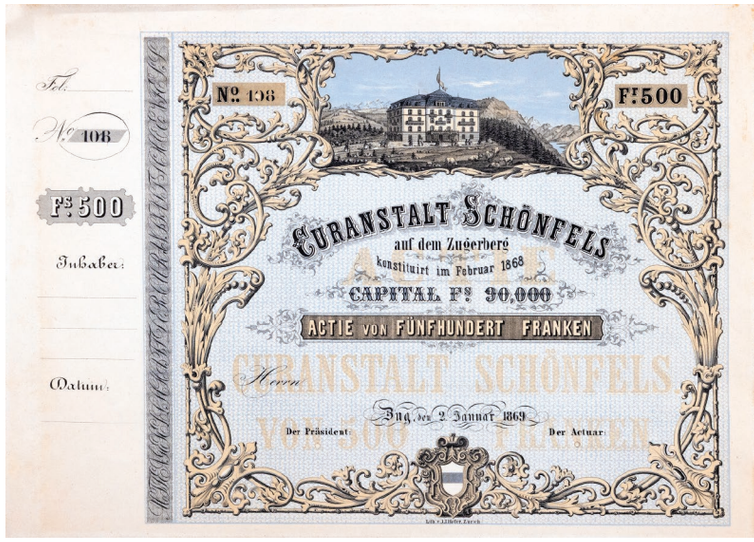
Inspired by the success of Felsenegg, the Cure Hotel Schönfels rose from the ground around 290 meters northeast of its rival in 1868. It opened in 1869 offering similar cures to Felsenegg (dairy products and medical bathing) but a different ambiance. It was more elegant, built of sandstone, and offered more modern bathing facilities in its annexe. In 1870, it opened its Trinkhalle. Trink- and Wandelhalle, some very ornate, were essential to the 19th century Cure Hotel. Guests could imbibe their curative drinks and take a stroll whatever the weather. The Schönfels Trinkhalle had a modest, bucolic design that was fashionable at the time.

In spite of its facilities, the Cure Hotel Schönfels was a financial disaster. The forecasts had been wildly optimistic and it was acquired by a member of the Board of Directors, the banker Franz Holz, who had no real commitment to the project. In 1893 and several owners later, Adolf Kummer, a hotelier from Winterthur with an excellent understanding of Swiss tourism, transformed the struggling spa into a Grand Hotel. Kummer invested heavily, extending and glamourising, even attracting royalty.

On 10th May 1898, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands arrived for a stay of four weeks. At this time, her mother was acting as Regent for the young queen who had inherited the throne on the death of her father when she was ten years old. Now 17, she came to Switzerland for an active holiday where she hiked around the Zugerberg and went on excursions to local sites such as the Höllgrotten caves. Although she travelled under a false name, that did not stop the Zugers coming out to wave as her carriage passed by on its way up the hill. The police on horseback accompanying the three grand carriages might have been a bit of a giveaway.



Kur- und Pensionshaus Schönfels brochure cover, left, 1869 and right circa 1870.



A 500 franc share in Hotel Schönfels, 1869



Above: Postcard image of the Kuranstalt Schönfels, 1903





Above: Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands a guest at Schönfels, 1898
Left: philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, a guest at Felsenegg, 1872



Postage stamp from Schönfels, 1890



Felsenegg. 910 m über Meer. **Schönfels.**
Lufkurort auf dem Zuger-Berg (Schweiz).

Ruhiger, angenehmer Aufenthaltsort. Prachtvolle Waldungen. Spaziergänge. Aussichtspunkte. Arzt. Bäder. Milch und Molken. Eisenbahnstation Zug. Telegraph etc. — Prospekte und nähere Auskunft über die Kuranstalten ertheilen bereitwilligst (M 5858 Z) [4172

Für Felsenegg: **J. P. Weiss,** Propr.
Für Schönfels: **J. M. Bodmer.**

NB. In Felsenegg können Massagekuren, verbunden mit schwedischen Douchen und Heilgymnastik, gemacht werden.

Joint advertisement for Felsenegg and Schönfels, 1886

The glory days of the grand hotels on the Zugerberg were that second half of the 19th century when access was still a challenge although perhaps part of the charm for guests. The road from Guggital to Geissboden had been built around 1850. During the short season the hotels were open, from May to September, the horse-drawn post carriage would make the journey twice a day, carrying hotel guests and tourists up the Zugerberg and back down. Queen Wilhelmina's carriages struggled up the steep hill (perhaps she had packed as befitting a queen) and needed regular rest-stops on the climb.

A lot changed with the opening of the Zugerbergbahn funicular train in 1907. It linked easily with the Zug railway station by electric tramway from Schönegg operated by the same company, the Zuger Berg- und Strassenbahn AG (ZBB). With an eye for an opportunity, Adolf Kummer master-minded the plan for a restaurant just above the station. It would become an iconic part of experiencing the Zugerberg.

The restaurant had a colourful backstory. One of the first world trade fairs was the Milan International Exhibition, also known as the Great Expo of Work, in 1906. It celebrated the new rail connection between Paris and Milan that had been achieved with the completion of the tunnel under the Simplon Pass.

Switzerland decided on a novel way to represent the country and its products. A traditional-looking Swiss chalet. The design and engineering of high-quality chalets, built by the manufacturer, transported across Europe and assembled on site, were the accomplishment of the Fabrique de Parquets et Chalets of Interlaken, founded in 1850. From its favourable position in the Exhibition, the Chalet Suisse operated a restaurant on its ground floor and terraces, with other spaces devoted to different Swiss products on the upper floor. There were wines from the Valais, beer from the Löwenbräu Burgdorf brewery and lots of cheese and chocolate. Also on display was a panorama of the Jungfrau.

After the exhibition the chalet was dismantled, shipped back to Switzerland and put up for sale to be acquired by the Hotel Schönfels and placed at the top of the newly opened funicular railway on the Zugerberg. At the time, the hotel was continuing to invest, with an extension to the annexe completed in 1910 which was then joined to the main building by a covered passageway in 1911.

The funicular should have been the precursor to years of prosperity for the hotels on the Zugerberg but then came World War I. In the absence of tourists, holiday destinations across neutral Switzerland were used to provide shelter for prisoners of war from both sides of the conflict. For the Zugerberg, however, the problem was more than simply the war. Improved transport was opening up landscapes whose magnificence drew visitors away from the lower parts of Switzerland to new resorts in the high Alps. The grand hotels on the Zugerberg were no longer economically viable.

However, education was a turning into a growth area. The gracious buildings on the Zugerberg, in their magnificent seclusion, would be transformed into schools. As we shall see, Hotel Felsenegg became the Voralpines Knabeninstitut Felsenegg in 1917. The Grand Hotel Schönfels continued a little longer but business was not bringing the returns it had in the past. By 1922, it was advertising its bowling alley as open to the public and offering bizarre treatments such as “Elektrotherapie” and the “Rickli-Kur”. And owner Adolf Kummer was getting old - already he had retired from actively managing the hotel. By 1925 he was ready to sell.



Schönegg, Felsenegg and Pilatus, circa 1902
Image source: Bibliothek Zug, Zuger Sammlung, TD_23_03558





Left: A tram at the Schönegg station, circa 1910. Image source: Bibliothek Zug, Zuger Sammlung, TD_23_01006. Right: The Zugerbergbahn, circa 1910. Image source: Bibliothek Zug, Zuger Sammlung, TD_23_01006.



French prisoners of war arriving at Hotel Schönfels, July 1917. Image source: Mansour S. Al Zamil

And Dr Max
buy.



Grand Hotel Schönfels after the construction of the north wing in 1902 but before the arrival of the Chalet Suisse in 1907.
The relative position and rendering of the buildings is simplified for artistic effect. Image source: Swiss National Library (NL), Bern. J.E. Wolfensberger. Schoenfels, Grand Hôtel, 937 m.ü.M., Zugerberg, Zug. S.l: [s.n.], 1955. Print.


ATTRAZIONE PRINCIPALE

CHALET SVIZZERO

di fronte al Palazzo dell'Agricoltura

Ingresso dalla Porta Domodossola (Piazza d'Armi)

Pasti a tutte le ore, a prezzo fisso e alla carta

PRODOTTI SVIZZERI

VINI - BIRRE SVIZZERE.

ACQUA MINERALE ALCALINA DI MONTREUX.

CIOCCOLATO ZÜRCHER MONTREUX.

Esposizione Svizzera

Panorama della Jungfrau



The manufacturer's inscription can be seen by the Chalet's northeast doorway entrance.


Exposition de Milan 1906

CHALET SUISSE

— RENDEZ-VOUS DES SUISSES —

VINS ET BIERE SUISSES H 4490 M 2430

PORTE DOMODOSSOLA PIAZZA D'ARMI


A VENDRE

à d'excellentes conditions

Chalet Suisse
(Exposition de Milan)

Piazza d'Armi

Advertisements for the Chalet Suisse, Switzerland's exhibit at the Great Expo of Work, Milan 1906, and for the sale of the Chalet shortly after.



A postcard showing the Chalet Suisse at the Exposition in Milan, 1906. The Art Nouveau style “Chalet Suisse” lettering by the upper windows provided the reference for the lettering which adorns the building’s opposite side today.



The Chalet as seen in a Schönfels photo album, circa 1920.





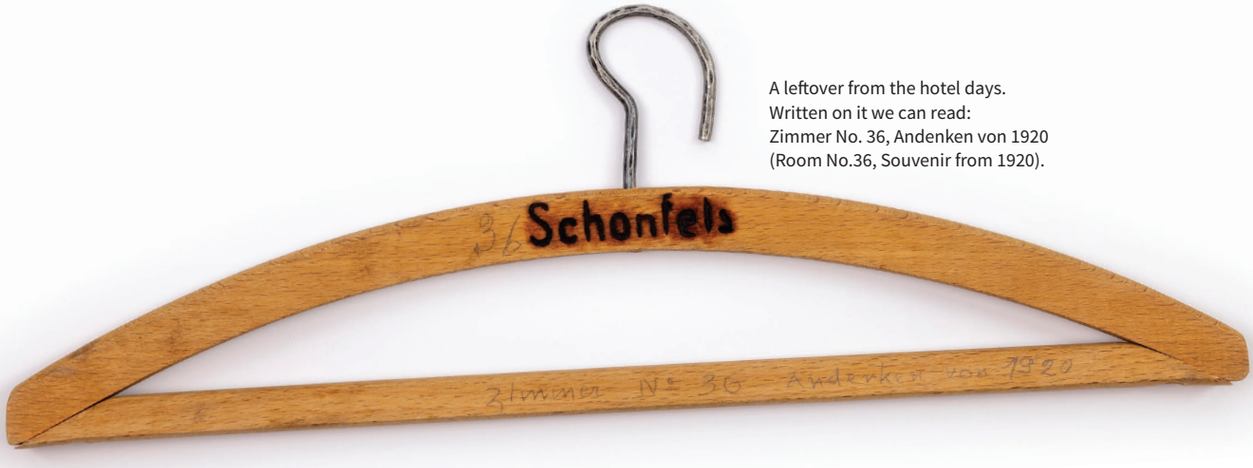
Advertisements for Schönfels and the Chalet Suisse Restaurant, 1908 and 1909.



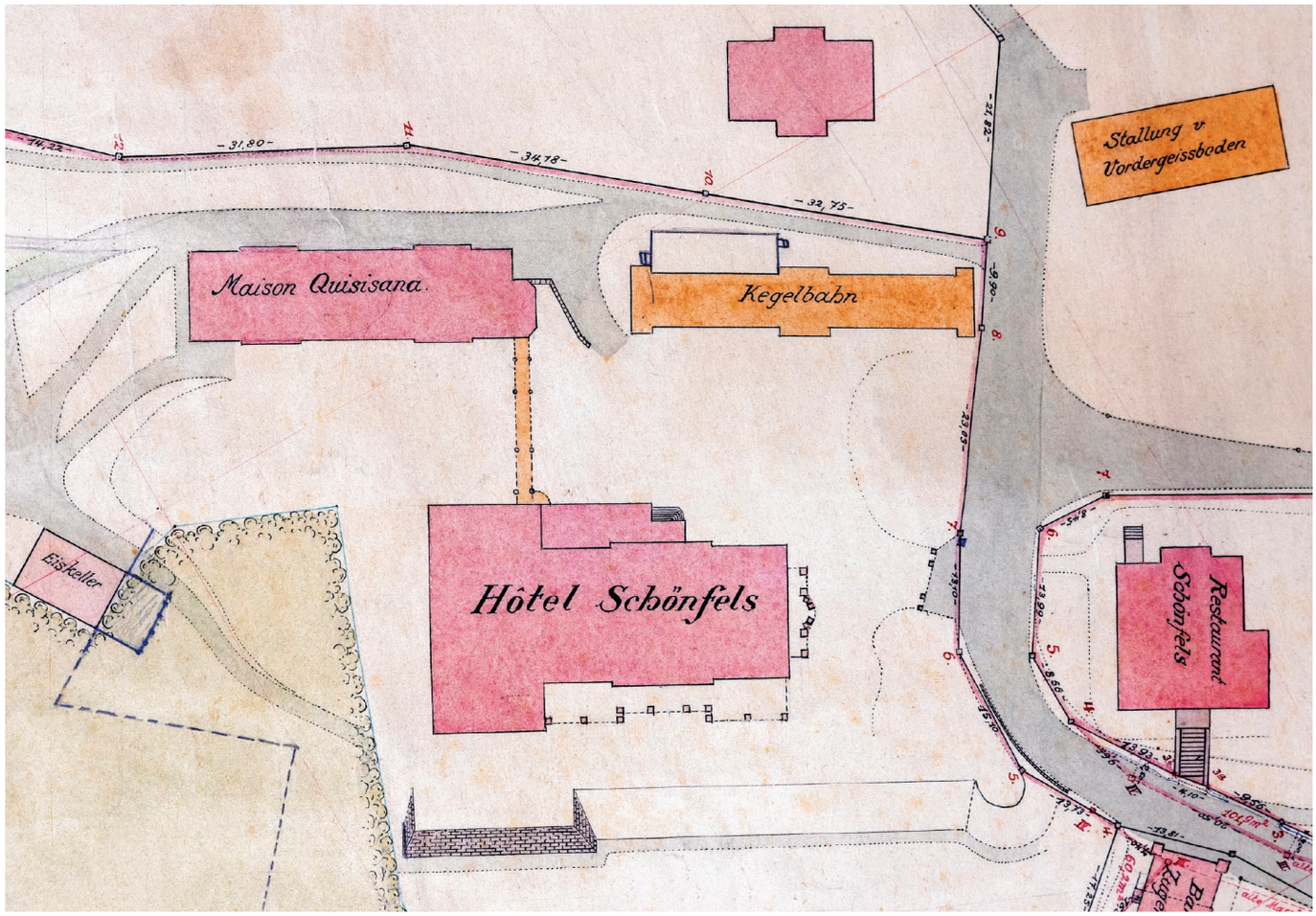


The 40 hand-carved, hand-painted dining chairs are the oldest surviving artefacts from the hotel era and have been in continuous use since before the turn of the 20th Century. Made of hard-wood, they have stood the test of time with minimal repairs. The set includes some with the Swiss flag and others with the emblems of Switzerland's cantons. The large chair uses different wood and carving styles and bears music and lyrics for a French song. It was the throne for St Nicholas on his annual Christmas visit to the Zugerberg.





A leftover from the hotel days.
Written on it we can read:
Zimmer No. 36, Andenken von 1920
(Room No.36, Souvenir from 1920).



Part of an official map made by the city of Zug in 1921 showing the hotel with the "Maison Quisisana" (today's Juventus). The hotel's bathhouse (or spa in today's words) was on the ground floor of Quisisana (from the Italian "qui si sana" – "here you become healthy"). It also shows the "Kegelbahn" (Trinkhalle), "Restaurant Schönfels" (Chalet Suisse) and the "Eiskeller" where Montana's chapel would be built in 1928.

Hotel Schönfels publicity for the Chalet Suisse Restaurant and the bowling alley, 1922, with information on the extra train service providing a connection with Zug. The bowling alley, installed in the south-east part of the Trinkhalle would be later enjoyed by the first generation of Montana students.



Before the closing of the hotel, the "Kurorchester" gave one final concert in August 1925.



WHO WAS MAX HUSMANN?

From Ukraine to Zürich

Max Husmann was born in modern day Ukraine, then under Russian rule, on 9th March, 1888. His father was Hersch Husmann and his mother was Chaja née Glasberg. Then named Meer Husmann, the future founder of Montana was one of six brothers and sisters. The family was living in Proskurow, a prosperous town in this western part of Ukraine with its fertile land and moderately continental climate.

Ukraine's long history of battles to preserve independence goes back to the seventeenth century when Peter the Great assimilated the state into his vast territory. The nineteenth century saw active efforts at Russification, reaching fever pitch when, in 1876, Tsar Alexander II banned the publication of Ukrainian language books, plays and even lyrics to accompany music. This further entrenched determination to hold onto traditional Ukrainian ways of life. But the assassination of the Tsar in 1881 only brought with it more repression and a series of further measures against publications in Ukrainian. Proskurow was in an especially vulnerable part of the country.

The Jewish community played a significant role in Proskurow's economy, owning factories and print houses and trading in lumber, grain and textiles. In 1897 the Jewish population was 11,411, comprising half of the town's total, and young Meer Husmann's family was Jewish, or at least partially. However, even in what had been an integrated community, the tensions of resurgent nationalism were, in the second part of the nineteenth century, contributing to a surge in antisemitism.



Max Husmann, circa 1920

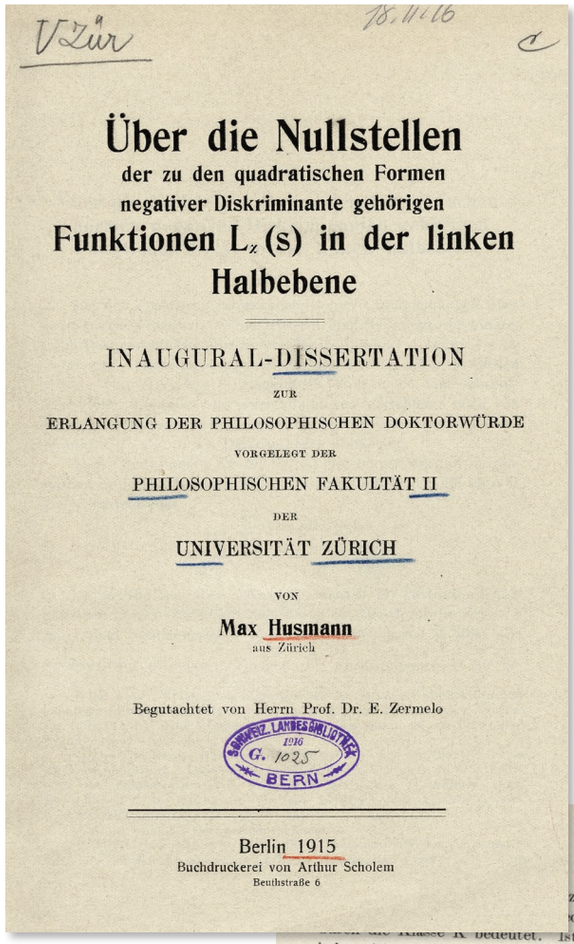


Postcard image of Proskurow, circa 1900

In 1899, the family moved to Switzerland and settled in Zürich, perhaps because of those tensions. There was, it seems, some Swiss heritage in the family history. Meer was ten or eleven years old when the family left Proskurow and he grew up learning the culture and the language of the family's new home. But whatever the reasons for moving to Switzerland, it turned out to be a fortunate decision.

If the Husmanns had not chosen to emigrate, many of the family would, possibly, have been slaughtered on 15th February 1919. Ukraine was two years into a War of Independence, during which Proskurow was relatively calm and secure. But skirmishes with rebels in the town in 1919 precipitated a massive act of gruesome revenge carried out by soldiers under Symon Petliura, the leader of the struggle for independence. Declaring the true enemy of an independent Ukraine to be the Jews, soldiers systematically entered houses and killed everyone they found with a connection to Judaism – men, women, children, the elderly. The killing was brutal. The soldiers deployed lances and bayonets rather than using up precious ammunition. The tally of the dead was put between 1,500 and 1,700.

By the time of the pogrom of Proskurow the Husmann family was settled in Zürich and young Meer, now called Max at school, was doing well. He attended the cantonal school then gained a place at Zürich's Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) School of Mechanical Engineering and went on to study mathematical sciences. This took him into the Faulty of Philosophy at the University of Zürich where earned his doctorate in 1915, researching and writing a thesis titled: "On the Zero Points of the Functions Lx (s) Belonging to Quadratic Forms with Negative Discriminants in the Left Half-Plane". The depth of his interest in his subject and his engineering brain are indicated by his invention of specialised mathematical drawing tools for which he applied for patents in 1912 and 1914.



VZür

18.11.16

Über die Nullstellen

der zu den quadratischen Formen negativer Diskriminante gehörigen

Funktionen $L_\chi(s)$ in der linken Halbebene

INAUGURAL-DISSERTATION

ZUR

ERLANGUNG DER PHILOSOPHISCHEN DOKTORWÜRDE

VORGELEGT DER

PHILOSOPHISCHEN FAKULTÄT II

DER

UNIVERSITÄT ZÜRICH

VON

Max Husmann

aus Zürich

Begutachtet von Herrn Prof. Dr. E. Zermelo

SCHWEIZ. LANDESBIBLIOTHEK 1916 G. 1025 BERN

Berlin 1915

Buchdruckerei von Arthur Scholem

Beuthstraße 6

Excerpts from Max Husmann's doctorate dissertation completed in 1915

Husmann's advisor at the University of Zürich was Dr Ernst Zermelo, himself a student of Max Planck – the founder of quantum theory and winner of the 1918 Nobel Prize in Physics.



This glass sign hung at the entrance to Husmann's school that was first located, in 1913, on Weinbergstrasse. After Husmann earned his doctorate, he changed the name to "Privatschule Dr. Husmann".

Husmann's studies for his doctorate were supervised by Dr Bernays and Professor Ernst Zermelo. The latter was a renowned German logician and mathematician who, as a student, had worked as an assistant to Nobel Prize winner Max Planck at the University of Berlin. His own work would have an important impact on the foundations of mathematics and continues to influence various applied fields of the subject to this day.

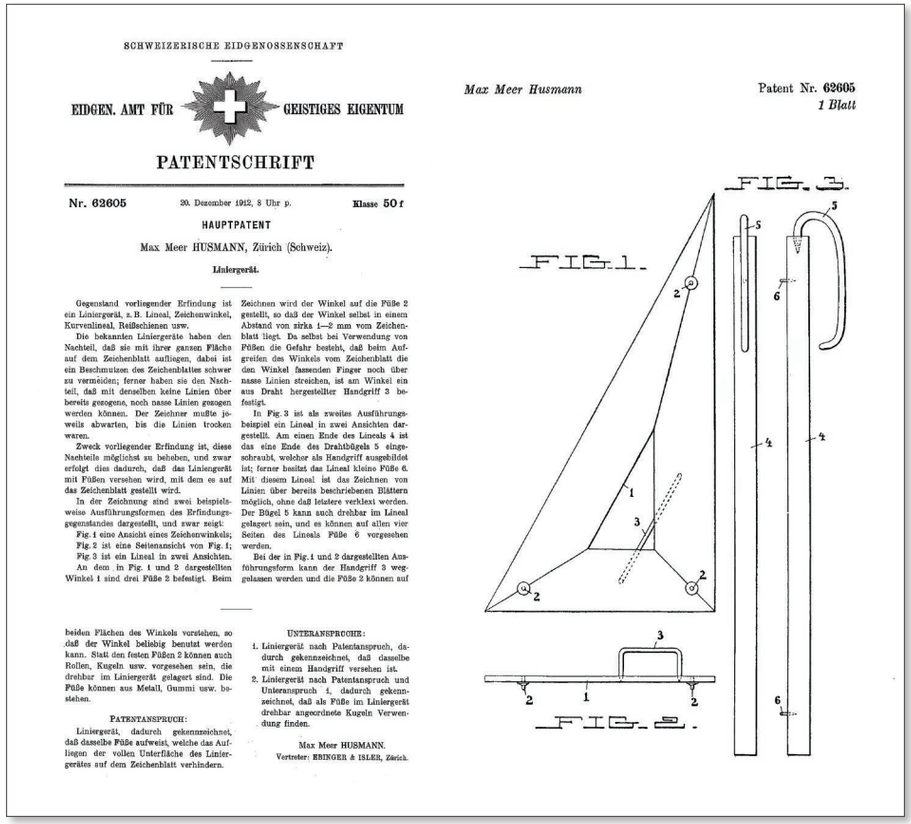
The young Max Husmann turned to teaching to support his studies, triggering a passion for education that would bring Montana into existence. He set up the Privatschule Max Husmann to tutor aspiring candidates for the ETH. The school expanded soon growing out of its original home at Weinbergstrasse 72 in Zürich's Kreis 6 district and moving the short distance to Sonnenbergstrasse 80, bought by Husmann in 1915. The Institut Minerva was just 90 meters away in this university quarter of the city, in a newly constructed building at Scheuchzerstrasse 2. In 1918, Institut Minerva and the Privatschule Dr. Max Husmann merged. Max Husmann would become the joint director and joint owner of a large, respected private school in Zürich.



From the brochure of the Privatschule Husmann, 1913. Here Husmann and his brother, also a maths teacher, lived and worked.
Image source: Universitätsbibliothek Zürich & Zentralbibliothek Zürich

On 27th June 1919, on his second application, Max (still officially Meer) Husmann was granted citizenship of the Canton of Zürich. In 1922, he made a request to the authorities that his name be formally changed from Meer to Max. As stated in the application, it was friends at the cantonal school who first called him Max. At the ETH he became known exclusively as “Max Husmann.” His doctorate was awarded to “Max Husmann.” Now, through his work as a teacher and head of various schools, he possessed an extremely large circle of acquaintances who knew him as Max. The application was granted. In 1922, he married Hanna Frey who was employed by Institut Minerva. It seems that the main motive for the arrangement was to enable her to remain in Switzerland. They divorced in 1924.

Max Husmann had many friends and colleagues in the Zürich of the 1920s, moving in cultured circles that attracted artistic and intellectual talent. Salomon David Steinberg was a poet and academic who would become a Director of Minerva in 1925. Lazar Wechsler had arrived in Zürich from Poland in 1914. He studied engineering at the ETH between 1914 and 1918 and worked as a tutor at Institut Minerva to help support his studies. He became a leading light of the emerging Swiss film industry and co-founded Praesens-Film in 1924. Max Husmann and Lazar Wechsler would support each other when one had recently founded a studio and the other opened a school. Several versions of a promotional film that brings to life the Montana of the 1920s and 1930s were created by Praesens-Film.



SCHWEIZERISCHE EIDGENOSSENSCHAFT

EIDGEN. AMT FÜR GEISTIGES EIGENTUM

PATENTSCHRIFT

Nr. 62605 — 20. Dezember 1912, 8 Uhr p. — Klasse 50 f

HAUPTPATENT

Max Meer HUSMANN, Zürich (Schweiz).

Liniergerät.

Gegenstand vorliegender Erfindung ist ein Liniergerät, z. B. Lineal, Zeichenwinkel, Kurvenlineal, Reißschienen usw.

Die bekannten Liniergeräte haben den Nachteil, daß sie mit ihrer ganzen Fläche auf dem Zeichenblatt aufliegen, dabei ist ein Beschmutzen des Zeichenblattes schwer zu vermeiden; ferner haben sie den Nachteil, daß mit denselben keine Linien über bereits gezogene, noch nasse Linien gezogen werden können. Der Zeichner mußte jeweils abwarten, bis die Linien trocken waren.

Zweck vorliegender Erfindung ist, diese Nachteile möglichst zu beheben, und zwar erfolgt dies dadurch, daß das Liniergerät mit Füßen versehen wird, mit dem es auf das Zeichenblatt gestellt wird.

In der Zeichnung sind zwei beispielsweise Ausführungsformen des Erfindungsgegenstandes dargestellt, und zwar zeigt:

Fig. 1 eine Ansicht eines Zeichenwinkels;
Fig. 2 ist eine Seitenansicht von Fig. 1;
Fig. 3 ist ein Lineal in zwei Ansichten.

An dem in Fig. 1 und 2 dargestellten Winkel 1 sind drei Füße 2 befestigt. Beim Zeichnen wird der Winkel auf die Füße 2 gestellt, so daß der Winkel selbst in einem Abstand von zirka 1—2 mm vom Zeichenblatt liegt. Da selbst bei Verwendung von Füßen die Gefahr besteht, daß beim Aufgreifen des Winkels vom Zeichenblatt die den Winkel fassenden Finger noch über nasse Linien streichen, ist am Winkel ein aus Draht hergestellter Handgriff 3 befestigt.

In Fig. 3 ist als zweites Ausführungsbeispiel ein Lineal in zwei Ansichten dargestellt. Am einen Ende des Lineals 4 ist das eine Ende des Drahtbügels 5 eingeschraubt, welcher als Handgriff ausgebildet ist; ferner besitzt das Lineal kleine Füße 6. Mit diesem Lineal ist das Zeichnen von Linien über bereits beschriebenen Blättern möglich, ohne daß letztere verklext werden. Der Bügel 5 kann auch drehbar im Lineal gelagert sein, und es können auf allen vier Seiten des Lineals Füße 6 vorgesehen werden.

Bei der in Fig. 1 und 2 dargestellten Ausführungsform kann der Handgriff 3 weggelassen werden und die Füße 2 können auf beiden Flächen des Winkels vorstehen, so daß der Winkel beliebig benutzt werden kann. Statt den festen Füßen 2 können auch Rollen, Kugeln usw. vorgesehen sein, die drehbar im Liniergerät gelagert sind. Die Füße können aus Metall, Gummi usw. bestehen.

PATENTANSPRUCH:

Liniergerät, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß dasselbe Füße aufweist, welche das Aufliegen der vollen Unterfläche des Liniergerätes auf dem Zeichenblatt verhindern.

UNTERANSPRÜCHE:

1. Liniergerät nach Patentanspruch, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß dasselbe mit einem Handgriff versehen ist.
2. Liniergerät nach Patentanspruch und Unteranspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß als Füße im Liniergerät drehbar angeordnete Kugeln Verwendung finden.

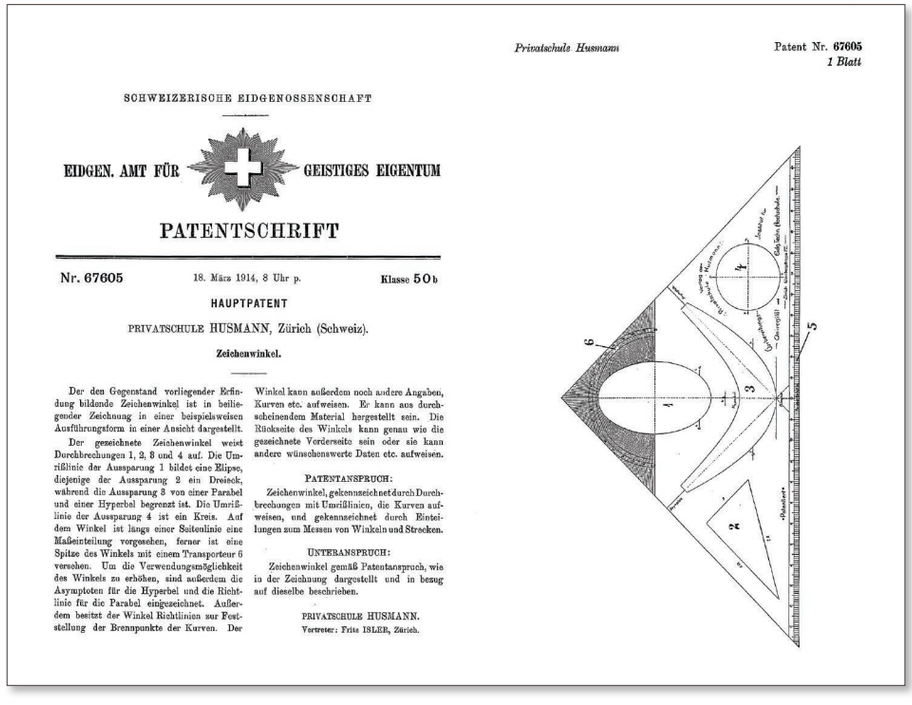
Max Meer HUSMANN.
Vertreter: EBINGER & ISLER, Zürich.

Max Meer Husmann — Patent Nr. 62605, *1 Blatt*

FIG. 1.

FIG. 3.

FIG. 2.



SCHWEIZERISCHE EIDGENOSSENSCHAFT

EIDGEN. AMT FÜR GEISTIGES EIGENTUM

PATENTSCHRIFT

Nr. 67605 — 18. März 1914, 8 Uhr p. — Klasse 50 b

HAUPTPATENT

PRIVATSCHULE HUSMANN, Zürich (Schweiz).

Zeichenwinkel.

Der den Gegenstand vorliegender Erfindung bildende Zeichenwinkel ist in beiliegender Zeichnung in einer beispielsweisen Ausführungsform in einer Ansicht dargestellt.

Der gezeichnete Zeichenwinkel weist Durchbrechungen 1, 2, 3 und 4 auf. Die Umrißlinie der Aussparung 1 bildet eine Ellipse, diejenige der Aussparung 2 ein Dreieck, während die Aussparung 3 von einer Parabel und einer Hyperbel begrenzt ist. Die Umrißlinie der Aussparung 4 ist ein Kreis. Auf dem Winkel ist längs einer Seitenlinie eine Maßeinteilung vorgesehen, ferner ist eine Spitze des Winkels mit einem Transporteur 6 versehen. Um die Verwendungsmöglichkeit des Winkels zu erhöhen, sind außerdem die Asymptoten für die Hyperbel und die Richtlinie für die Parabel eingezeichnet. Außerdem besitzt der Winkel Richtlinien zur Feststellung der Brennpunkte der Kurven. Der Winkel kann außerdem noch andere Angaben, Kurven etc. aufweisen. Er kann aus durchscheinendem Material hergestellt sein. Die Rückseite des Winkels kann genau wie die gezeichnete Vorderseite sein oder sie kann andere wünschenswerte Daten etc. aufweisen.

PATENTANSPRUCH:

Zeichenwinkel, gekennzeichnet durch Durchbrechungen mit Umrißlinien, die Kurven aufweisen, und gekennzeichnet durch Einteilungen zum Messen von Winkeln und Strecken.

UNTERANSPRUCH:

Zeichenwinkel gemäß Patentanspruch, wie in der Zeichnung dargestellt und in bezug auf dieselbe beschrieben.

PRIVATSCHULE HUSMANN.
Vertreter: Fritz ISLER, Zürich.

Privatschule Husmann — Patent Nr. 67605, *1 Blatt*

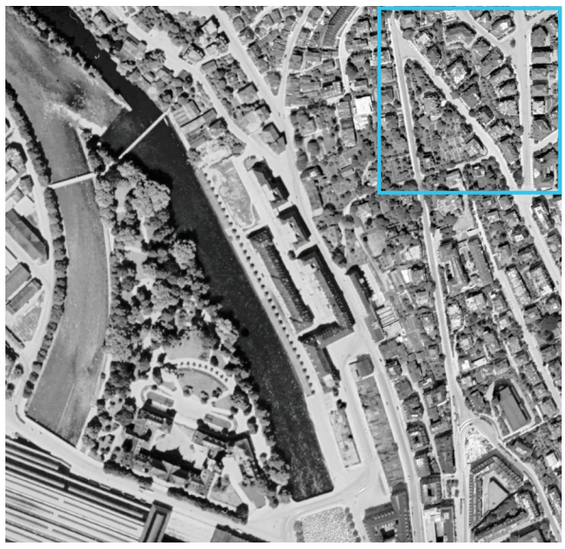
In 1912 and 1914, Husmann invented and patented two drafting devices. The tool above was to be used for drawing lines using a fountain pen more quickly by not needing to wait for the ink to dry. This was accomplished by adding three small feet to the bottom of the tool, which made only minimal contact with the surface of the paper, thus not smearing wet ink. The Zeichenwinkel tool is a triangular ruler with various shapes cut out, the kind of device that young students worldwide have used for many decades. It appears that Husmann did not pursue manufacturing or licensing his inventions.

Husmann's next residence and location of his school was in the Unterstrass neighbourhood, at Sonneggstrasse 80. The property was built in 1911, purchased by Husmann in 1915, and was located just four houses up the street from his school's first location on Weinbergstrasse. Image source: Minerva Schweiz AG, Zürich.



In 1918, Husmann's private school merged with Institut Minerva, which was (and still is) located just 90 meters from Husmann's building. Institut Minerva then expanded to use both buildings and Husmann became co-owner and co-director, along with Augustus Merck. Image source: ETH Baugeschichtliches Archiv, Ruef-Hirt Friedrich.



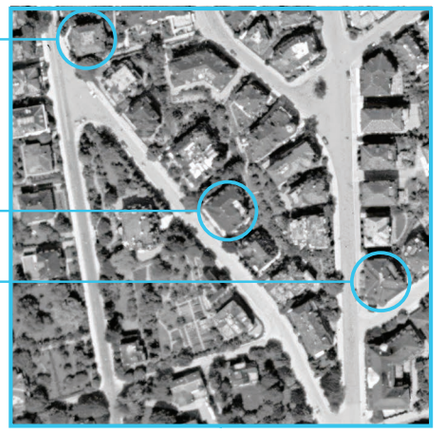


Privatschule Husmann
first location
Weinbergstrasse 72

Privatschule Dr Husmann
second location
Sonneggstrasse 80

Institut Minerva
Scheuchzerstrasse 2

Unterstrass / Kreis 6 map detail
approx. 200 m x 200 m



In this aerial photo from 1931, the close proximity of Husmann's private school locations and Institut Minerva are indicated.

The young Max Husmann's interests were wide-ranging and included civic involvement. He was involved in a project testing water quality for the city of Zürich, was a member of the Verkehrsverein and was on the committee of the Stadttheater Zürich, organising events to raise the funds that would enable it to retain the artists, stage the works and provide the facilities of a world class theatre.

It was a world in which he met the woman who would be his next wife. Beatrice Alexandrine Dart was an opera singer based in Münich who often performed in Zürich in the 1920s and was so applauded, especially for her signature role "La Traviata", that the local press carried announcements when she came to town. Dart was her stage name, she was of the Hart family from Bucharest in Romania. The wedding of Beatrice and Max was celebrated on 3rd July 1926, exactly two months after the opening of Montana.



Max Husmann and Beatrice Husmann-Dart in front of the Trinkhalle, circa 1935





Portraits of Beatrice Dart taken in 1920, before her marriage to Husmann. She was known in Zürich for her lead role as Violetta in Verdi's "La Traviata" and the image on the right was captured by renowned photographer Madame d'Ora, who also photographed cultural luminaries of the Belle Epoque era such as Josephine Baker, Coco Chanel, Gustav Klimt, and Pablo Picasso. Image source (right): Madame d'Ora, Ullstein Bild via Getty Images.

During these years, Max Husmann was reflecting on education. He created, in his mind, the school that would deliver his ideal, an education that would contribute to a world more harmonious. The backstory to his past provides, perhaps, some clues to his overall aims and ambitions. He was a young man in his twenties, studying in Zürich when he, his parents and his brothers and sisters, would have listened to news of the pogrom back in their town of origin. It is likely they had friends and family who died that day, others who survived and would live stricken with the horror of what they had witnessed.

Max Husmann grew up profoundly influenced by Ukraine's struggle for its cultural and linguistic survival against a giant power that sought to suppress its independence. His abhorrence of war and his determination to find a way to educate for peace, along with his deep belief in tolerance of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, had roots that were deeply personal as well as ethical.



Postcard view of the village of Malters in 1911. It is about 10 km west of the city of Luzern. Image source: ZHB Luzern, Sondersammlung, P LKa.56.1.11 (1).

The family from Malters

In the 1930s, Husmann set out to establish stronger connections with his adopted homeland. The story passed down in the Husmann family told of a connection with a Swiss family who had emigrated to Russia. So he researched Husmanns in Switzerland and came across, through luck as much as research, some Husmanns based in Malters. He contacted the local mayor, Niklaus Seeberger, who looked into municipal records and came up with the verdict that Dr Max Husmann was indeed the descendant of Josef Husmann von der Wipfern, a cooper who had emigrated from Malters to Russia in the 18th century. On 17th April 1941, the municipal assembly granted Dr Husmann citizenship of Malters.



Already a Swiss citizen in Zürich, why was Husmann pursuing this goal? We cannot know for sure but we can put his motivation into context with other issues we know about with which he was dealing at the time. In researching his family genealogy, Husmann was seeking a deeper claim to belonging in Switzerland to that granted by Zürich to an immigrant (on second application). The need for belonging might also have been driven by the smear campaign about his past that, we shall see, was going on at the time. Family lineage going back to Malters would have seemed a nice repost to police reports that, in 1941, would describe him as "that Russian Jew" (see page 80).

It remains a theory. However, we do know that Husmann became more involved in the community of Malters than has been widely recognised. After his death in 1965, members of the municipality published a piece in the *Luzerner Tagblatt* that honoured his generosity to the town of Malters and his role in Operation Sunrise in 1945, the story of which shall be told in a later chapter:

He repeatedly visited his hometown and, on each visit, left a sum of money for our children's home. Over the years, his donations amounted to several thousand francs. In his last will and testament, he bequeathed 20,000 francs to the Malters Children's Home. A beautiful token of gratitude for a service that was, by right, his. He deserves our sincere thanks.

The tireless worker Dr. Husmann was not satisfied with simply running his schools.... Through the mediation of his friends in Italy and Switzerland, Baron Parrilli and the current Major-General Max Waibel, Dr. Husmann succeeded in making a significant contribution to ensuring that Northern Italy was spared from destruction and that Switzerland was spared from a very likely attack by a desperate army that would have found no other way out than to invade our country. Today, our great fellow citizen lies among the dead. We will remember him with gratitude.

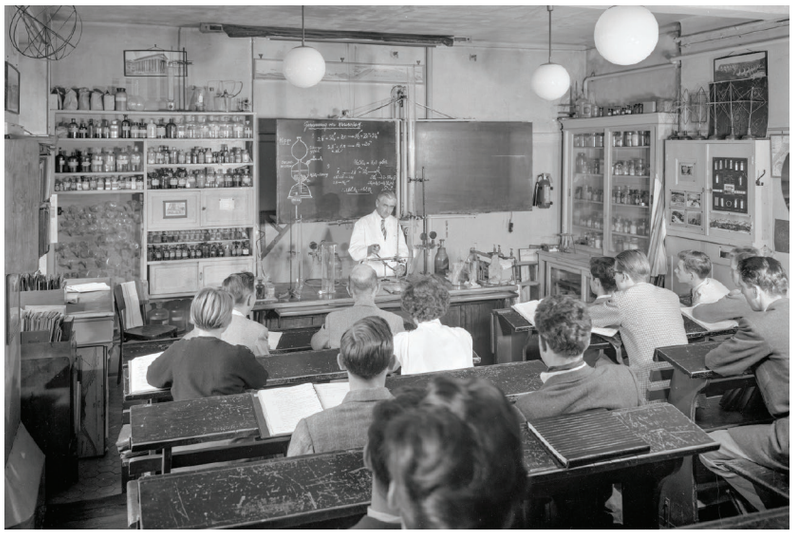


Husmann, circa 1927

INSTITUT MINERVA
MONTANA'S "OLDER SISTER"



Minerva standardized and published its own study guidebooks, one of which on trigonometry was written by Max Husmann in 1910.



Chemistry class, 1954. Image source: ETH Baugeschichtliches Archiv, Hans Meiner

Institut Minerva was founded in 1904. Its founders are named as Augustus Merk, Dr Keller and Dr Laager. It was the first private university entrance preparatory school in Switzerland, what would be called in England a tutorial college. Its purpose was the preparation of students with ambitions to enter prestigious Swiss universities such as the ETH, many of whom might not have been successful in conventional schools. It offered a personalised approach to learning, which included small classes that were organised according to previous knowledge of the subject rather than age. Students could move between levels depending on their speed of learning. It was a success and soon outgrew its premises on Universitätsstrasse 18. In 1909 it moved to Scheuchzerstrasse 2 which had been designed for the needs of the school, so there were classrooms, a large garden and space to offer student accommodation.

Minerva's purpose and aims were very similar to Husmann's school at Sonneggstrasse 80 (which was also the Husmann family residence) and they merged in 1918 retaining both addresses. During that time, it was common to see print advertisements in local news outlets where announcements for the two schools appeared side by side, offering an educational path for students of all ages.





Above left: An advertisement showing Minerva's first location on Universitätstrasse, 1907. Above right: Minerva, Roman goddess of wisdom, on the school's logo.



Minerva's letterhead in 1910 after the school had relocated to its current location on Scheuchzerstrasse



Institut Minerva, circa 1935. Minerva's building on Scheuchzerstrasse was designed with the intention of being a boarding school by the architecture firm BSA Zürich. Image source: Minerva Schweiz AG.

Post the merger, Institut Minerva was a significant school in Zürich. It was an innovative project. As well as coaching for the Matura, it developed a commercial department with specialist courses for medical assistants and laboratory technicians and others in modern languages. It had a tolerant outlook and welcomed teachers and students who were Jewish rather than putting the religious restrictions that were more common in the early part of the 20th century on entrance. Minerva developed and published its own line of textbooks, covering all of the subject matter taught in the school. Husmann compiled and authored one such textbook on Trigonometry.

Max Husmann's friends and relations are found employed by the school. His brother Abraham was a long-standing mathematics teacher and Sonja Kunelsky-Husmann worked at Minerva for 23 years until her death in 1942 aged 59.

By 1934, Max Husmann was a co-owner along with Director J. Züger and Director Dr Salomon David Steinberg. Minerva still exists in 2026 as a successful vocational school with branches throughout Switzerland. It was Dr Steinberg who, in a speech during the ceremony to celebrate Montana's 25th anniversary in 1951, warmly referred to Minerva as Montana's "older sister". The building on Sonneggstrasse remained in Max Husmann's name until his death in 1965, when he left it in his will to the Max Husmann Foundation. Institut Minerva became a succesful vocational school with branches throughout Switzerland. The building on Scheuchzerstrasse is still its Zürich home in 2026.

FRIENDSHIPS BEYOND BORDERS

International Education Part 1

The idea of international education and how to do it is central to the Montana story. This brief overview will put Husmann's vision into the context of the time.

The idea of international education was born in the 1920s but international learning was not new. Scholars have travelled across borders to meet up in learning communities for hundreds, thousands, of years. There were intellectual powerhouses in the East, in Persia and in North Africa in ancient times. In medieval Europe, universities were international seats of learning, sharing knowledge and using Latin as a common language of academe. Schooling, however, was more pinned to place and therefore more subject to interpretation according to national politics and national conventions.

Moving on to the 20th century, the idea that schooling could, perhaps should, take a more supranational perspective started to develop, albeit sometimes shaped by the colonial thinking of previous generations. But, after the appalling bloodshed of World War I (1914 - 1918), an aspiration to achieve better cooperation between nations started to emerge, accompanied by the idea that education could make a difference.

The movement found a favourable context in Switzerland, where international organisations, such as the League of Nations and the International Labour Office, were setting up head quarters in Geneva. The educated, cosmopolitan employees of these organisations sought an education for their children that would educate for the intercultural, open-minded approach that aligned with their lifestyles. At the same time, business was becoming multinational, also moving families across the globe. The first international school was set up in Geneva in 1924. Montana, in 1926, was soon after along with a wave of others, including in Japan where a group of expatriate parents set up an international school in September 1924.

It was generally expected that the children educated at a private international boarding school would return to their "home" countries for the next stage of their lives. Back in the 1920s, independent, private schools had freedom to develop their own curriculum, within certain parameters. A school like Montana would negotiate with national school authorities so that its programme was recognised in the countries from which it drew its pupils.

From the mid 1920s, however, the limitations to this idea were starting to be recognised and a diploma that would be internationally recognised was conceived as a way forward. It would be an opportunity to develop a curriculum that was less constricted by nationally framed thinking about knowledge. World War II postponed real progress until the 1950s when the seeds for the programme that would become the International Baccalaureate were planted in a series of conferences among international educators. And that is another story.



PART TWO
A NEW SCHOOL ON THE ZUGERBERG
1926 *to* 1946

A VISION BECOMES REAL

Mind and body must be trained and educated in close contact with nature and her secrets.

Montana brochure, circa 1929

By 1925, Max Husmann had set up his "Privatschule", he had made it grow and then merge with Institut Minerva, an innovative educational project itself. But he wanted to do something more. He had a vision for a special sort of school that would harness the power of education to do good. As well as personally prepared - clear thinking and open-minded - its graduates would help lead the world away from conflict to a sustainable peace. We are, of course, back in post World War I Europe. It was legitimate to assume that it would be the sons, but not the daughters, from influential families who would have an impact on society. The vision was planned around them. But the school would develop as the world changed. It would always be, to paraphrase Husmann, work in progress.

Traditional schools for upper class boys then had an emphasis on the classics and a lot of learning by rote. Any emotional component of learning was largely ignored. Max Husmann wanted a new version of schooling and he was not alone, a wave of educational movements were experimenting with change.

Kurt Hahn's belief in moral decency and outdoor challenges was building Schloss Salem and then Gordonstoun. In Germany, Rudolf Steiner set up the first Waldorf school in 1919 for workers of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette family, unorthodox for the time with its holistic approach and comprehensive access, serving all children regardless of gender, ability or social class. Maria Montessori's thinking was revolutionising primary education. In England, A. S. Neill's theories on freedom and happiness reigned at Summerhill. International education was pioneered at the International School of Geneva, where girls were also welcomed from the opening of its gates in 1924.





In Husmann's vision, the school must be a boarding school surrounded by countryside. Thus it would offer a more complete education than a city based institution like Minerva. School, he believed, should imbue young people with physical and mental health away from the nervous city and its spiritual pollution. At the same time, the advantages of connections with the outside world were part of the plan, both for the cultural facilities of the city and, possibly, as a selling point for parents.

The old Grand Hotel Schönfels was for sale. It was not only idyllic but utterly fit for purpose. Zug, such an easy journey from Zürich even in the 1920s. A picturesque ride up a funicular railway, an almost spiritual separation between urban pressures and a life more pastoral. Meadows bordered by forests. Buildings that bore the grace of a bygone era and with the space for a modern school. The neighbours were farmers and their cows.

There was another neighbour. Just a few minutes' gentle stroll from Grand Hotel Schönfels, the Institut Felsenegg was standing proudly on the crest of the hill, gazing down on the lake. In 1917, the Institut Platanhof in Zug, founded in 1903 by Professor Johannes Hug-Huber, had moved up to the Zugerberg, taking over the elegant buildings of the then financially challenged hotel. Hotel Felsenegg had been converted into school accommodation with boarding facilities, classrooms, sports fields and gardens. It taught modern languages, promoted the advantages of physical fitness in its natural surroundings, and operated a flexible class system with small classes. Its brochure told prospective parents about the importance of religious tolerance and caring behaviour. Leadership in 1925 was shared between Frau Paula Hug-Huber (widow of Johannes who had died young) and Dr Lusser. But the school that Husmann was about to locate next to Felsenegg offered something else. The element of his school that most clearly differentiated Institut Montana from the neighbouring Institut Felsenegg was Husmann's vision for internationalism.



Shares for Institut Montana, November 1925



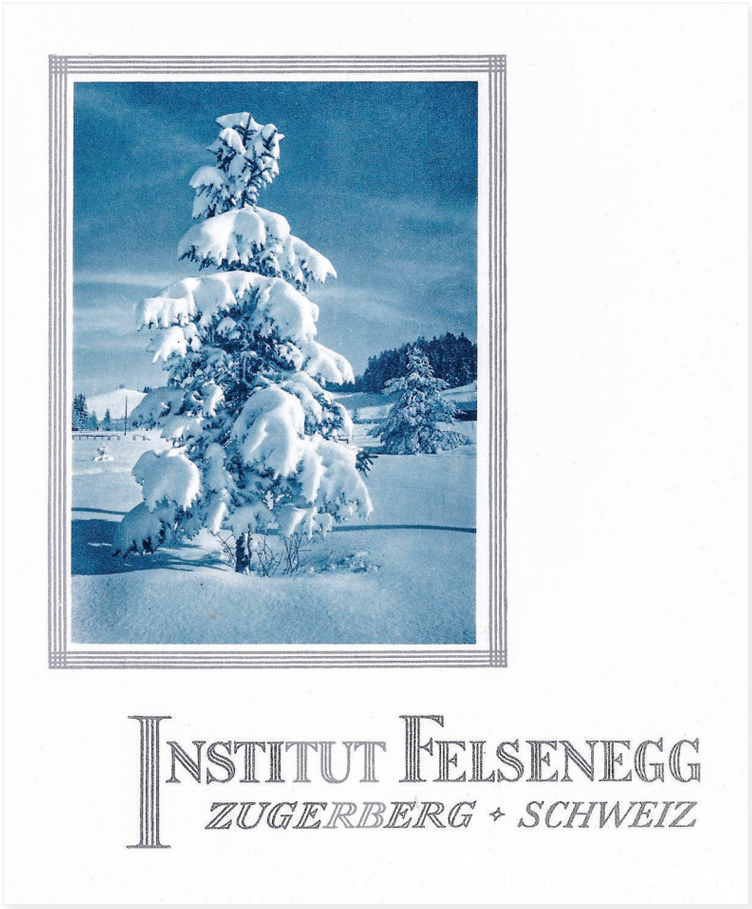
Institut Felsenegg, brochure images, 1926.
The small Sportplatz shown above was located in the east grounds, near the Kapelle.



Institut Felsenegg advertisement, 1930

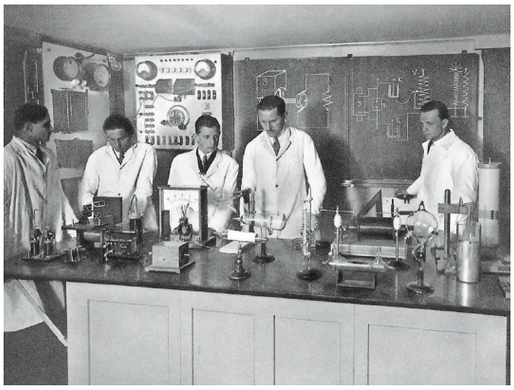


Institut Felsenegg, circa 1930















Brochure images, circa 1930

The dining room for Institut Felsenegg would go on to become Montana's Aula. The two large mirrors now in the Aula date back to the hotel era and have hung there for circa 150 years.

One of Felsenegg's carpentry rooms was on the ground floor of the building that was the hotel's dairy, where today there is the Art Room for the International School. The other was in today's Mediathek.

In winter, the two tennis courts by the chapel were used for ice hockey. Image source: Mansour S. Al Zamil.

Whether Husmann considered Institut Felsenegg as healthy competition or foresaw the expansion opportunity it might provide, we can not know. We do know that he saw the location of the Hotel Schönfels as exactly what he sought and that he was able to purchase the site on terms that were positive for his ambitions. Institut Montana AG was set up on 16th November 1925, registered in Zug. The share capital was set at 350,000 francs (three hundred and fifty thousand francs), divided into 350 registered shares of 1,000 francs each. Ultimately, this meant he handed over 100,000 francs to the vendor, Sebastian Kummer. Were it not for the lucky convergence between Herr Kummer's desire to sell the property and Max Husmann's readiness to invest in his vision, Institut Montana might never have existed.

The transaction was negotiated in 1925 and, by May 1926, Max Husmann could open his school. He called it Montana.

Why was Montana called Montana?
While the full story of the choice of name will remain hidden by time and those who might have known are long since gone, we do have some information about where the name came from.

It was the suggestion of Husmann's friend, Salomon David Steinberg, an intellectual born in Lucerne in 1889. He is considered one of Switzerland's few expressionist poets, with several published collections to his name. As cultural editor for the Zürcher Post he became friends with prominent thinkers of the time such as Kurt Guggenheim, Else Schüler and Rainer Maria Rilke. He studied history, German literature and philosophy in Berlin and Zürich where he earned his doctorate in 1913. He was a close personal and professional contact of Max Husmann (they lived near to each other and to Institut Minerva in Zürich). From 1925 until his death in 1965, he acted as a Director for the Institut Minerva. After he died, his wife created the Foundation Salomon David Steinberg that continues to provide grants for doctoral students in Human Sciences at the University of Zürich. Why he suggested "Montana" we can not say. But if some alumnus is inspired to explore his poetry, perhaps they will find a clue to the origins of the name - Montana.



Dr Salomon David Steinberg at Montana's 25th anniversary celebration in 1951

From eight students to over two hundred

The school opened on May 3rd 1926 with six students. Soon after there were eight: Hans/Erich Emden, Max Hüsler, Heinz Kohler, Erone Lavazza, Hans Luss, Eugen Müntener, Hans Wyder and Sergio Zingone. Academic years and school semesters were less structured than now, so haphazard entries throughout the year were not unusual. From its early days, there was a Montana Summer School bringing activity to the Zugerberg throughout the year.

The school grew quickly to around 30 boys by the end of 1926. By 1929, they numbered 100. The biggest groups continued to be Swiss, Italian and German, but, apart from those core countries, there were boys from what we would now call Eastern Europe, Spain, England and America, and others from further afield including South America, Afghanistan, Persia and India.

Recruitment was fuelled by creative publicity targeting an international market. Informative brochures in several languages sold the vision with advertisements placed in newspapers across Europe both for the main school and for its summer vacation courses. Networks in Germany and Italy were passing the word, and Max Husmann and his close colleague Huldreich Sauerwein gave talks in major cities such as London and Berlin. They brought their talks to life with inspiring and innovative cine film that showed life on the Zugerberg as a magical version of education.



In the first decade, record cards for nearly all students were kept in two wooden boxes one of which is shown here. They had photos of the boys, some biographical and physical details, and the dates they arrived at and left the school. Sometimes they included grades, boarding room numbers (brothers were often paired together), intended destination after Montana, and remarks on personalities or abilities. Paperwork, parental correspondence and other documents were collected separately in each student's dossier.

Below (from left to right):
Max Hüsler, Hans Bucher, and Vigano Galeazzo
Bottom (from left to right):
Claudio Alberti, Jacinto Montllor, Hermann Schütz, Miguel Montllor, Salvatore Salvia, and Pasquale Barra



















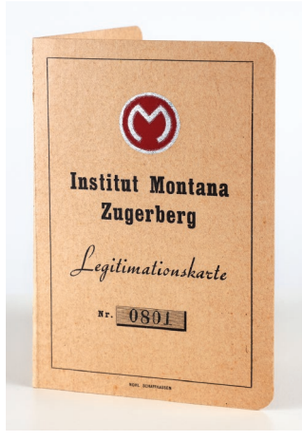
Not long after the school opened, Husmann rushed a provisional brochure into production. Interiors appear unchanged from the last days of the hotel suggesting the images were taken from a previous hotel brochure. There are a few images in which a studio photo retoucher has superimposed boys into the frame. In the football image there is an obvious clue – the shadow of the tree on the hill goes in the opposite direction to the players on the field. Image source: Mansour S. Al Zamil



Montana's students and teachers, 1927



For attracting Brazilian families, a brochure was made in 1926.



Early Montana students were issued an identification card which would contain their photo, name and other details.



Advertisement, 1927

Looking at Montana's growth over these years, we have to discard current notions of rigid courses framed by required years of study. A private boarding school was often a temporary solution for families with sons who would stay a year or two, maybe three, and sometimes only a few months. There were boys from the Netherlands, Italy and Germany who came to Montana for the opportunity to earn a leaving certificate that was recognised in their country's universities while learning languages in an international environment.

Those from further afield were generally part of an international community of diplomats, bankers or industrialists who spent a few years in Europe before returning to their home country with sons who had experienced the life-changing opportunity to live a little while on a Swiss mountain.

From correspondence with parents, we can see that many were attracted by the innovative features of a Montana education - the bringing together of different nationalities, the individual attention that accommodated different rates of learning, a curriculum that taught skills for life and the warm and supportive relations between the teachers and those whom they taught.

In its first year, the whole school - adults and boys - lived in the beautiful building, all classical proportions and porticoes, that had been the Grand Hotel Schönfels. The following year, younger boys moved to the Dependance annexe, later to be called Juventus. The Chalet Suisse at first continued as a restaurant open to the public, but a new restaurant was built by the station for the funicular railway and the Chalet became fully part of the school from 1930. It served as privileged accommodation for older students whose achievements - a good attitude as well as academic results - were outstanding.





When the time had come to equip the former Hotel Schönfels with the necessary equipment to become a school, Dr Husmann called upon trusted vendors with whom he has already done business for Institut Minerva. Two of those were Hunziker Söhne, the makers of the classroom furniture and Theo Muggli, a supplier of typewriters and other office machines. Hunziker, based in Thalwil, is still in business after six generations and will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2026.



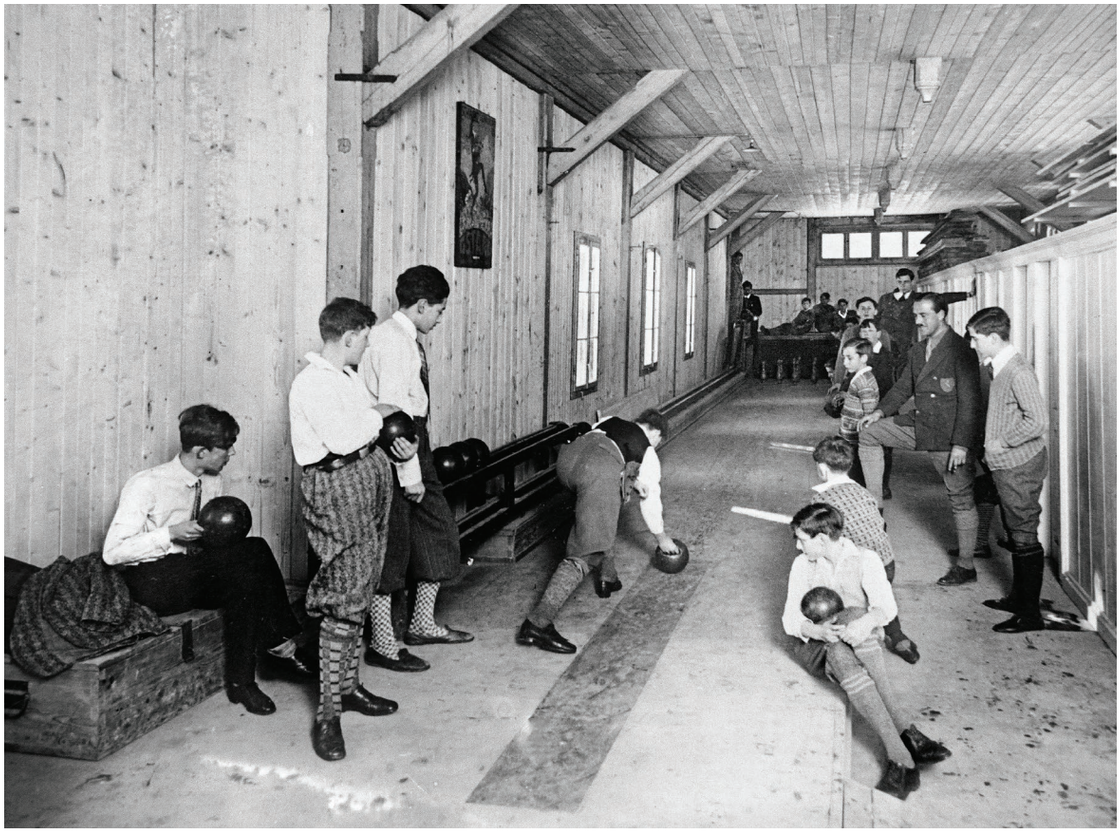




Typewriting was part of the Montana curriculum for boys looking to go into business. They used machines from an American company, Royal Typewriter, that manufactured models for the German-speaking market. The model pictured left, now in the collection at Minerva in Zürich, is exactly the same as the one used at Montana in the 1930s .



Dr Guido Hoppeler speaks to the assembled students and teachers in the Dining Hall before lunch is served, 1927.
He was codirector of Montana from 1926 to 1934.



The Kegelbahn installed by the Grand-Hotel Schönfels in the Trinkhalle provided fun for early generations of Montana students.
Sports master Huldreich Sauerwein, on the right, observes the game.

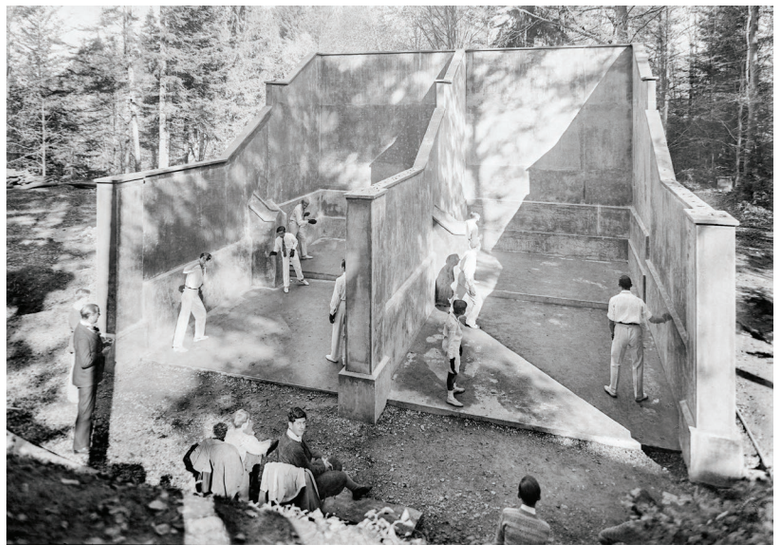
Eton Fives on the Zugerberg

With its origins at Eton College, Fives was one aspect of the English public school that was enthusiastically adopted at Montana. Courts were built and they were ready for action in 1927, the same year as Huldreich Sauerwein, whose connections with England probably initiated the idea, arrived at the school.

It is a handball game with its own rule system played on a three-sided court reminiscent of a squash court. The game was favoured at Montana not simply for its opportunity for fast-moving activity but also its mental training. It requires meticulous teamwork and a shared strategy. Usually played without a referee, the game demands a high level of "fair play". Husmann believed passionately in these qualities although we don't know if he played the game himself. Fives was so popular that it soon became an inter-house competition. When the first match with another school was arranged, students trained hard to reach the high standard required to represent Montana. There were many excellent players to choose from. The Spanish boys were especially proficient, perhaps, we hear from Manuel de Villalonga who became School Captain, because of the similarities between Fives and a game played in Spain, "la pelota vasca" (that has origins back to the 13th century and is still played today).

Montana won the first inter-school Fives tournament in Switzerland. The account of the match does not reveal the name of the other school involved, but we can hazard an informed guess at the Lyceum Alpinum Zuoz, probably the only other school in Switzerland at the time that had built Fives courts. Lyceum Alpinum Zuoz still has them today, in 2026. And Huldreich Sauerwein had taught at Zuoz before coming to Montana so it is feasible that he brought it from England to both schools.

Montana's Fives courts were located in the area that has become the Bilingual Primary School's Pavilion building. The game was still promoted in the school brochure of 1954 but interest subsequently waned and the courts were demolished at the end of the 1950s.



Eton Fives courts, circa 1934. The courts were located between the Turnhalle and the Chapel, at today's Waldschule.



A Montana Fives team with a Brazilian student, two Spaniards, and one Argentinian vs. a visiting team, 1929. Tournaments were organized by Huldreich Sauerwein (centre).

Man erlernt es so leicht, bringt es aber so schwer zur Vollendung! Tourniere steigern das Interesse an diesem schönen Spiel. Es kommt zu hinreissenden Spielmomenten.

It's so easy to learn, but so difficult to master! Tournaments increase interest in this beautiful game. There are some thrilling moments.

Georg Michanowsky, age 15, 1936



Georg Michanowsky

A SCHOOL WITH HIGH AMBITIONS 1926 *to* 1939

What was life and learning like for those young people who came to the school on the Zugerberg in the 1920s and 1930s?

First, some basics. The age range was wide, from children aged 7 or 8 up to almost adults already turned 20. They had been born into privileged backgrounds, whether the money came from old families (there were aristocrats and there were connections with royalty) or from the developing world of wealthy industrialists and bankers. They were denominationally diverse: Catholics and Protestants, Jews, and the occasional Muslim from further afield.
We find some stories, courageous and sad, like young Viktor Mikinzinsky who was described as *staatenlos* on his school records. It seems his mother, who had Russian citizenship before 1914, had fled to Berlin, and young Viktor turns up at Montana in 1933 when he would have been 13 years old, to stay until 1936. He was one of the lucky ones who survived the war despite becoming a fighter in the French resistance. The first Montana girl makes an entrance. Ursula Berliner appears in some early photos from when she attended the Montana summer school for just over a month in 1935.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a private school like Montana had a lot of freedom to organise learning programmes and deliver them in ways that fitted with its educational philosophy. Such flexibility would survive neither the growth in numbers nor the increasingly specific requirements of the different national education boards. School organsation in these early years, however, reflects Husmann's ideals.







Above: Aerial photo of Montana circa 1933. A few observers can just be seen on the balcony of the Chalet, out to watch the plane passing overhead.

Left: Viktor Mikinzinsky
Right: Friedrich Hegi



French class in the forest with Myram Meyer during the summer of 1935.
Montana's first female student, Ursula Berliner, on the far right

Den grössten Eindruck machte auf mich das kameradschaftliche Zusammenleben der verschiedensten Nationen und das Verhältnis zwischen Lehrern und Schülern.

My greatest impression was the friendly coexistence of the different nations and the relationship between teachers and students.

Friedrich Hegi, age 15, Montana Review 1933



Above: Hands together – Husmann and students by the swimming pool, 1933

Right: Husmann and his sister, Maria Gutstein, 1936



At the same time, Husmann was not always on the Zugerberg. He kept his home in Zürich and his oversight role as a director of Institut Minerva. He was often travelling to promote Montana across Europe. But he remained the pedagogical leader and, as a formidable mathematician, would get involved in helping to explain difficult mathematical concepts to the students and teachers. While travelling, he was consulted by his staff on daily questions and supported by Frau Gutstein, one of his sisters, who was in charge of domestic life at the school and who acted as his deputy in his absence.

In an essay in the 1933 Montana Review, Husmann mentions that there had been some staffing issues, mistakes in the selection process, but he was convinced that the composition of the staff had now achieved harmony. Two prominent members who were integral to putting his vision into practice were Walter Keller and Huldreich Sauerwein.

Walter Keller was at the school from the beginning. Although he had taught at the Hochschule in Zürich, he was not your average teacher having given up the classroom for a life more thespian. He was a theatre director in Hamburg until ill health prompted an early retirement from that maybe high-charged world and he came to join Husmann's project. He was versatile and interested in art, with great personal charm and a friendly approach to everyone, inspiring for his students and popular with his colleagues. It is thanks to Dr Keller that Montana began its long story of exciting theatre.





Above:
Walter Keller, 1936
Right:
Huldreich Sauerwein, 1928

Huldreich Sauerwein joined Montana in 1927. He had studied in England, was a remarkable polyglot and a passionate advocate for promoting moral strength through participation in sports. He wrote about his beliefs in its benefits in Montana publications and put them into action, organising competitive tournaments in-school, with other teams of the region and from beyond Swiss borders. Effectively an assistant director until he left in 1942, Sauerwein also became the public relations face of Montana, speaking about the school and its mission at events across Europe.

Berti Keller was head secretary from 1930 to 1946 and would go on to act as Ostermayer's main source of information about the school's early years when he came to write his book "50 Jahre Institut Montana Zugerberg 1926-1976".

Montana Learning in the 1920s and 1930s

In those years of curiosity and optimism, the developing sciences of psychology and child development, along with an emerging respect for Swiss educator Johann Pestalozzi (1746 - 1827), were influencing educationalists and shaping their methods. Pestalozzi was specifically referenced in early Montana literature, although his teaching was still revolutionary in the 1920s for his beliefs in putting the interests of the child first and in authority based on love not fear. Husmann's description in school publicity of teachers as friends and guides as well as educators is resonant of Pestalozzi for whom these qualities enabled good learning to happen.

The Montana approach was carefully explained to prospective parents in brochures. Its key idea was to see each pupil as an individual and correspondence with parents describes a learning experience minutely tailored to each boy's level of understanding and subsequent progress.

The system of flexible classes was the main tool to put individualisation into practice. Small groups for each subject brought together boys of, brochures explained, *equal talents and attainments*. A pupil was assigned to classes according to his current ability in that subject which was then monitored so that he could be moved if he turned out to be especially talented in some areas and not others.



Husmann and Berti Keller at work, as seen in these snapshots from a photo album from spring and summer, 1935. Ever image-conscious, after Husmann notices the camera, he takes off his hat, hides his cigar and straightens up for the second photo.



The commemorative statue of Pestalozzi on the Bahnhofstrasse in Zürich, installed in 1899

The detailed early brochures explain how attainment is impacted by the rate at which maturity develops and how this is entirely individual. Consequently, the child should be helped to progress rather than blamed if he does not. Montana teachers would closely observe every student and make an individual assessment of what help they might need. The idea of academic progress being subject to speed of learning, and how that varies between children, is mainstream now (and integrated into modern teaching methods) but was new in the 1920s. Fundamentally, it is underpinned by a belief in the potential of every student.

At the same time, the Montana method focused on learning to think independently:

Cramming and the overburdening of pupils' brains with mountains of facts is avoided. We aim rather in our methods at developing the reasoning powers, to train pupils to marshal for their purpose such data as they acquire and to draw inferences.

The school made clear to parents that it did not believe in the use of corporal punishment nor in holding a boy back a year for not meeting the grades - this could cause psychological damage. Instead, individual attention would help the student conquer his difficulties:

... special attention devoted to his weak points. In this way he will be spared humiliation, and retain that self-confidence which otherwise he would have lost.

Parents were reassured that their sons would live a structured life with clear guidelines and a healthy schedule. The school would combine *the best of old approved methods with new educational principles and achievements (Montana teacher Huldreich Sauerwein 1938)*. The boys would be safe on their little mountain.

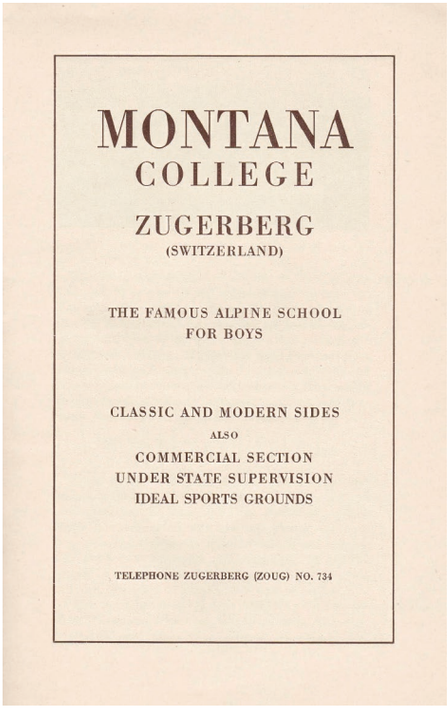
Correspondence with the families shows that the parents who sent their sons to Montana were attracted by the school's progressive approach. For them, its ideas on modern teaching and concern for the well-being of its students were important and differentiated a Montana education from the alternatives they could have chosen.

An early version of International Education

Max Husmann strongly believed that education for a more peaceful world needed to be international, bringing together citizens of different nations. He would recruit students not only from Switzerland but from countries across Europe and beyond and bring them to live and learn on the Zugerberg.

The Montana model of international education was described by teacher and Husmann collaborator Huldreich Sauerwein in a speech on the Montana model at a conference about *Problems in Modern Education* held at Harrow School near London in 1938.

Excerpts from an English language Montana brochure, 1929

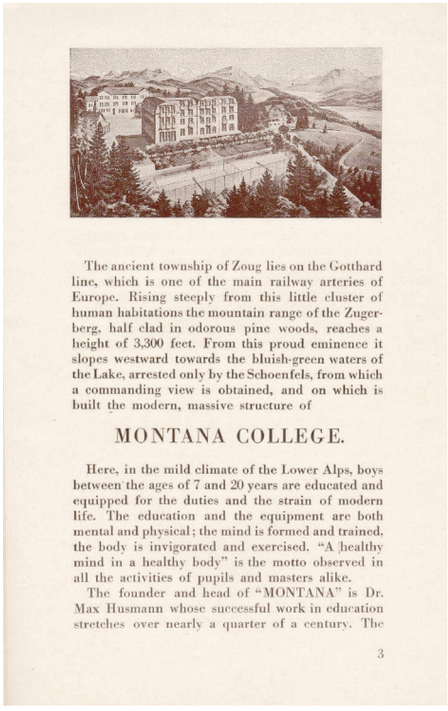


MONTANA
COLLEGE
ZUGERBERG
(SWITZERLAND)

THE FAMOUS ALPINE SCHOOL
FOR BOYS

CLASSIC AND MODERN SIDES
ALSO
COMMERCIAL SECTION
UNDER STATE SUPERVISION
IDEAL SPORTS GROUNDS

TELEPHONE ZUGERBERG (ZOUG) NO. 734



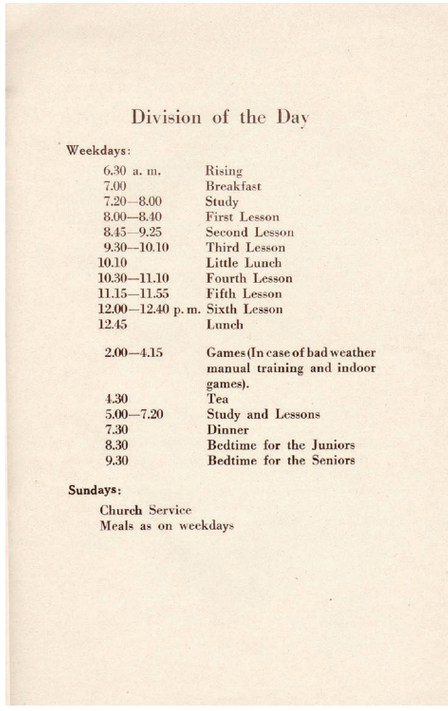
The ancient township of Zoug lies on the Gotthard line, which is one of the main railway arteries of Europe. Rising steeply from this little cluster of human habitations the mountain range of the Zugerberg, half clad in odorous pine woods, reaches a height of 3,300 feet. From this proud eminence it slopes westward towards the bluish-green waters of the Lake, arrested only by the Schoenfels, from which a commanding view is obtained, and on which is built the modern, massive structure of

MONTANA COLLEGE.

Here, in the mild climate of the Lower Alps, boys between the ages of 7 and 20 years are educated and equipped for the duties and the strain of modern life. The education and the equipment are both mental and physical; the mind is formed and trained, the body is invigorated and exercised. "A healthy mind in a healthy body" is the motto observed in all the activities of pupils and masters alike.

The founder and head of "MONTANA" is Dr. Max Husmann whose successful work in education stretches over nearly a quarter of a century. The

3



Division of the Day

Weekdays:

6.30 a. m.	Rising
7.00	Breakfast
7.20—8.00	Study
8.00—8.40	First Lesson
8.45—9.25	Second Lesson
9.30—10.10	Third Lesson
10.10	Little Lunch
10.30—11.10	Fourth Lesson
11.15—11.55	Fifth Lesson
12.00—12.40 p. m.	Sixth Lesson
12.45	Lunch
2.00—4.15	Games (In case of bad weather manual training and indoor games).
4.30	Tea
5.00—7.20	Study and Lessons
7.30	Dinner
8.30	Bedtime for the Juniors
9.30	Bedtime for the Seniors

Sundays:

Church Service
Meals as on weekdays

He promoted the significance, and the beauty, of *national education in an international environment*. Montana students would return to their home countries able to continue their studies without the gap encountered by others who moved around the world. They were taught by *masters of their own nationality, they were not isolated in a strange country but always surrounded by the homely atmosphere of national tradition*.

The piece, as many writings from almost 100 years ago (and as the other speeches from the conference on religion, freedom, curriculum), now seems dated. Time moves on. The speech is underpinned by a robust belief in a socio-cultural elite, it resonates with the post-colonial assumptions that still shaped political discourse, and we would no longer talk about "*these foreigners*" in the way that was accepted then. However, the ideology itself was entirely well-meaning and reflects an important contemporary concern. Accelerating globalisation was bringing with it the perceived threat of cultural homogenisation. Educating the boys according to their home culture in their mother tongue, while living as members of an international community, was a resourceful solution.

National education in a multicultural environment

At the very beginning, Montana adapted the programme of the Canton of Zug, taught in French or German, for its own purposes, with students moving in and out of classes depending on their rate of progress. It was explained in the school brochure how students with other languages would take a preparatory course to master the rudiments of either French or German, thus enabling them to enter upon the special, individually designed, course of studies decided upon for each boy. At the same time, there was some teaching in Italian and an English tutor was employed to teach English speakers. For the students from further away, many of whom came from Spain and South America, the process had to be highly individualised.



Class outdoors with Emily Assenmacher, circa 1933



Students in a chemistry lesson investigating reactions between acids and metals, circa 1933



Afternoons were allotted for games such as billiards, chess, card playing, and dominoes when the weather was unsuitable for outdoor sports and training, circa 1933

As an independent school of the 1920s, Montana had the freedom pretty much to create its own curriculum so it could deliver a learning programme that was bespoke for each pupil. It was an era when personalised letters of recommendation rather than standardised testing were the main component of a university application, freeing up an approach more fluid. However, as the school grew in numbers, such fluidity became complicated. Furthermore, as the 1920s turned into the 1930s, national education was also changing, developing more specific national curricula with their own grading systems. Both these factors created the context for the establishment of national sections within the school. This was the system that Sauerwein would present to other educators as a model of international education in 1938.

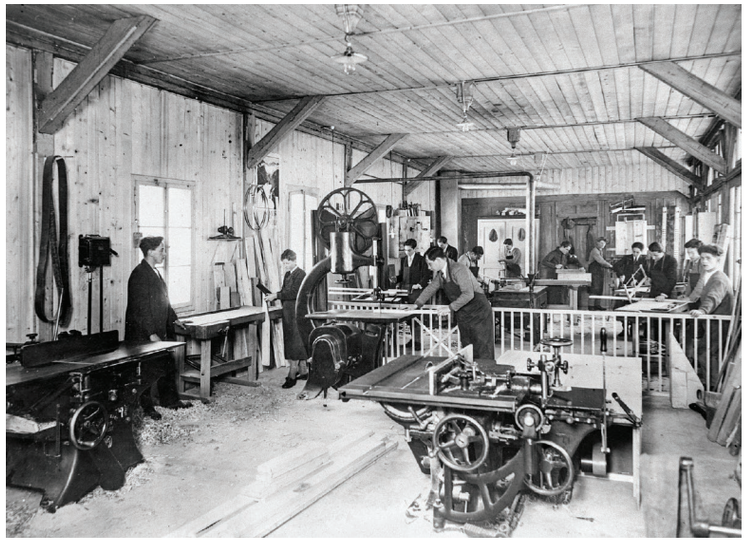
The early sections

An Italian Section was recognised as an Italian School abroad by the education authorities in Rome in 1933. This recognition set specific requirements for the curriculum as well as the appointment by the Italian government of a teacher to lead the section. The first *Abilitazione tecnica* certificates were awarded in 1934. The section grew quickly, numbering over half the school by 1935 and the first *Licenza liceale* certificates awarded in 1936. However, the agreement with the Italian government, in a school promoting tolerance and integration, including of Jews, while Italy went down a different path, would have predictable (with hindsight) repercussions, as we shall see.

In the 1930s, the school was attracting the attention of families in the Netherlands, in part through contacts of Huldreich Sauerwein followed up by advertising in appropriate media. Favourable exchange rates and an interest in a school that could take care of children with respiratory issues served to boost recruitment. In 1935, formal recognition led to the establishment of a Dutch Section where boys would receive lessons in Dutch history and literature but study for Swiss leaving certificates that had been approved for entrance to Dutch universities.



Metalworking in Juventus, circa 1933



Woodworking in the Trinkhalle, circa 1933



Dining Hall, circa 1930

The Swiss Section was less a Swiss Section then. It was comprised of students of different nations and languages, including many boys from Germany, the main defining feature being that teaching was in German. From 1932, Montana could award a Handelsdiplom (a commercial diploma) but students seeking entrance to Swiss universities would transfer to Institut Minerva to take their Matura. It was 1937 when the Canton of Zug granted permission for a Montana cantonal Matura (enables entrance to several Swiss universities). It was awarded to four students (two Swiss, one from Luxembourg and the other from Liechtenstein) although the class itself was much larger, including two more Swiss, five or six boys from Germany, a Hungarian and a couple of boys from Afghanistan. It would be some years later and well past the next war before Montana could offer a Federal Matura (allows entrance to all Swiss universities, including ETH, except for medicine).

Austrian students were taught with the other German speakers and, if they successfully passed the examination before an expert from the Austrian Ministry of Culture, their cantonal Matura was recognised in Austria. A small group of English boys received classes in English in the quasi English section set up by Sauerwein, who had arranged for boys to be able to sit for the English School Leaving Certificate at Montana. Older English boys would join for a short time between school and university to improve their languages.

Far more nationalities were educated at the school than there were sections. Records are incomplete so specific numbers are no longer available, but they suggest that a significant number of Spanish families were sending sons to Montana. There were scatterings of other nationalities - Argentinian, American, Portuguese, Chilean, Czech, Polish, Russian, Latvian, Yugoslavian, very few French, and a few outliers from Afghanistan, Persia, Romania, Luxembourg, Norway and India. There was also a notably high number of boys from Brazil, enough that Josef Ostermayer would comment later (in his Montana 50th anniversary book) that it was almost a section in itself. It is not clear what exactly they studied, probably some sort of diverse programme with a focus on learning languages.



At the swimming pool, 1935



Racing down the slopes, circa 1933



Ski instruction with Mr Meyer and Mr von Rohr, circa 1930

Being a residential school was central to making the model work. Husmann clarified his thinking on boarding in an essay, repeated across several school reviews and brochures, explaining its advantages. All the students and the teachers lived on campus as a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic group, thoroughly immersed, he explained, in an international community beyond the classroom.

A student of the mid-1930s, Hans Caminer from Berlin, described a rule about languages that provides a glimpse on this polyglot world:

Two days a week, at official functions such as meals or assemblies, you were only allowed to speak German, two days French and two days Italian.

As well as the school languages, Hans studied English to a high level. His multilingualism would serve him well when he and his family had to flee Germany and start new lives in the United States - see his story at the end of this section in our chronology.

At a time when religious conventions were still accepted as an organising principle in many contexts, Montana was proudly multi-denominational. Jewish families from Germany and Italy as well as other East European countries found a school that allowed their sons to combine academics with their hebraic studies. The numbers show a notable influx of German Jewish boys in 1933 as the threat of persecution was become a reality and their parents sought safety for their sons. As the school attracted more applicants from other nations, especially from Islamic countries further East, the same approach was applied to all religious faiths.

Living at school

Industrialisation was taking hold across Europe whose cities were expanding and becoming shrouded in the grey smog of particle filled air. As a consequence, the notion that youth would be better off somewhere more bucolic became popular. As Husmann wrote in a piece for the internationally prestigious newspaper, Neue Züricher Zeitung (NZZ), in March1941 entitled "*How Do I Secure My Children's Future?*":



Montana, circa 1930 with a radio antenna mounted on top of the flag pole above the supports that had held the large "Schoenfels" sign not long before.



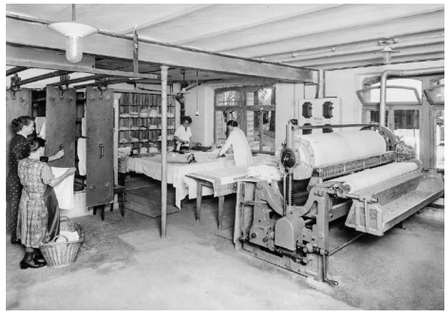
Boarding bathroom, circa 1930



Individual bedroom, circa 1930



Kitchen, circa 1930



Laundry facilities in Juventus, circa 1930

A SCHOOL WITH HIGH AMBITIONS

The longing for healthy physical culture arose from the age of technology. It was an urgent demand of our time to establish in the mountains not only sanatoriums for the sick, but also educational centres for the growing youth of big cities. Prevention is much easier and more valuable than curing disease. Therefore, protect the young body, create living conditions in which it can grow strong, and give young people, who are not necessarily tied to jobs in the big city, the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment and to fill their growing bodies with vital energy.

The promotional materials of the 1930s celebrate the sophistication of Montana's domestic arrangements. The boys would live in the comfort to which they were accustomed. The dining room was elegant, the bedrooms well-appointed and there were plenty of washing facilities. The kitchen was modern and equipped with dishwashers. The school had its own laundry. Boys could play billiards in their spare time. The dining room had a projection screen for viewing films and there was an antenna installed on the roof for communal listening to radio broadcasts.

For the first decade of Montana's existence it occupied the Zugerberg side by side with the Institut Felsenegg. Contemporaries remembered what some called "friendly rivalry" and others "competition" between the two schools although it was not uncommon for students to transfer between them in those years.

In 1937, the Institut Felsenegg came up for sale. Since the economic rumblings of the Wall Street Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression of the 1930s, its financial position had destabilised, problems that might have been exacerbated by over borrowing, and it was taken over by new trustees in 1933 that linked it with Institut auf dem Rosenberg in St. Gallen. Co-director Paula Hug left. However, Institut Felsenegg's financial situation did not recover and it was sold to Max Husmann to join with Montana in 1937. Its classrooms would be used by the Italian and Dutch Sections and its living accommodation for ninety students



8 mm film stills of the Herbstolympiade, 1938. Remarkably, some of it was shot on colour film which had only become available in Europe less than two years previously.



housed boys aged between thirteen and sixteen. It had a large sports field, tennis courts and its own chapel so that it became possible for Catholics and Protestants to attend their Sunday services separately. By 1937, few memories of Felsenegg's previous existence as a hotel remained except in the gracious proportions of what became known as the Aula where the two tall, ornate mirrors, still there today, had also graced the dining room of the Grand Hotel.

After the acquisition, Husmann's school had space for over 200 pupils. The beautiful tree-lined avenue that had been the magnificent entrance to Institut Felsenegg became part of Montana. Treading its path would become a feature of daily life for the students on the Zugerberg. Very soon, Husmann had contacted Frau Hug to offer her a position in his school. She returned to the Zugerberg to become a key member of his staff - the Frau Professor.

As Montana spread across multiple buildings on what could now be called a campus, the role of Housemaster developed, a teacher who lived in the building and was in charge of both the discipline and education of the students in that house. The Housemasters were supported by "Hausmüttern" (one of whom was Max Husmann's sister Frau Gutstein). The word "house" however, as used at the school, did not apply to the buildings but had another function.

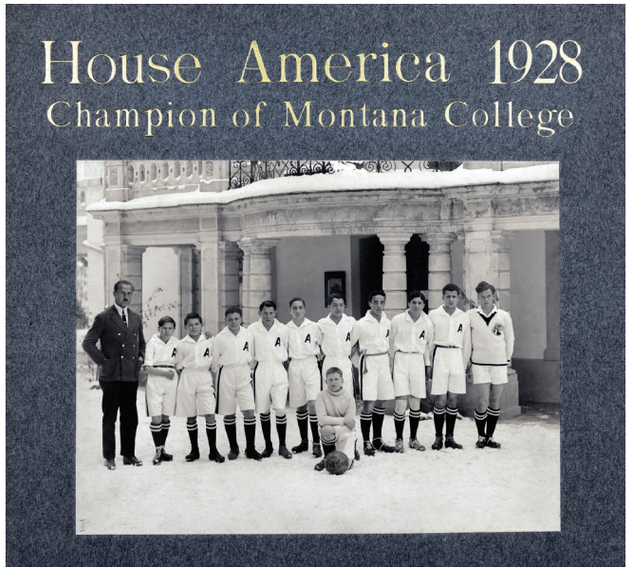
Houses

As it grew, the school was divided into units called "Houses", an organising principle that had its origins in the model of the traditional English boarding school. Each House was captained by an older boy of good reputation who earned special privileges such as living in the Chalet. After a discussion that included representatives of the students, the first House names were chosen. America, Nordiska and Latinia. An article in the Montana Review suggests the divisions had connections with the home countries of its members:

A house was no longer just a sports team: for every student it represented a piece of a distant homeland to defend in a foreign land. It was for us Italians and for our Spanish colleagues an island of Latinity on Swiss soil.
Claudio Alberti, Montana Review 1930

From 1927 onwards, the inter-house event of the year was the athletics competition - "die traditionelle Leichtathletik Olympiade".

By 1930, the school had outgrown the three houses. They expanded in number, became mixed nationality and went classical - Athena, Sparta, Olympia, Theba, Corinthia, Roma, Karthago. The younger boys were divided off and "Juventus" (with sub-groups of Romulus and Remus) was invented. The theory was that, as well as sports teams, the Houses were the organising factor for table groupings in the dining room where inter-house sports competitions would provide a lot to talk about in the language of the day.







The school day
The school day was organised into three parts. Lessons in the morning. Afternoons for sports, handiwork or arts - these activities were outside of the national groupings for academic classes. Evening was study time. Those afternoons of handiwork and arts were not an ancillary but considered essential to an all-round education. Learning was structured and well-equipped workshops enabled students to:

... gain the manual ability so necessary in our days of progress in mechanical devices. During the course opportunity is afforded for the practical application of what has been learnt. Wireless, telephone and other apparatus are constructed as well as models of historical and geographical interest.
Brochure Montana College probably 1929.

The Trinkhalle became part carpentry workshop for afternoon handiwork as well as part bowling alley as an energetic activity even when the weather was wet. The bowling alley had been inherited when the Hotel Schönfels was purchased to become Montana.

Every boy was given the opportunity to learn music with lessons in piano or violin so that those who wished to continue to advanced musical studies were well-prepared to follow their dreams. Theatre productions were important parts of the school year with boys acting, dancing, singing and making sets.

The links between physical exercise and mental well being were written about effusively in school publicity. Investment went into football and field hockey pitches, tennis courts, four Eton Fives courts and an ice rink. There was a gymnasium for training and a court for boccia (a form of bowling). Skiing on the slopes of the Zugerberg was popular (and feasible) in the snowy winters, even all the way down to Zug for those who were considered sufficiently proficient.

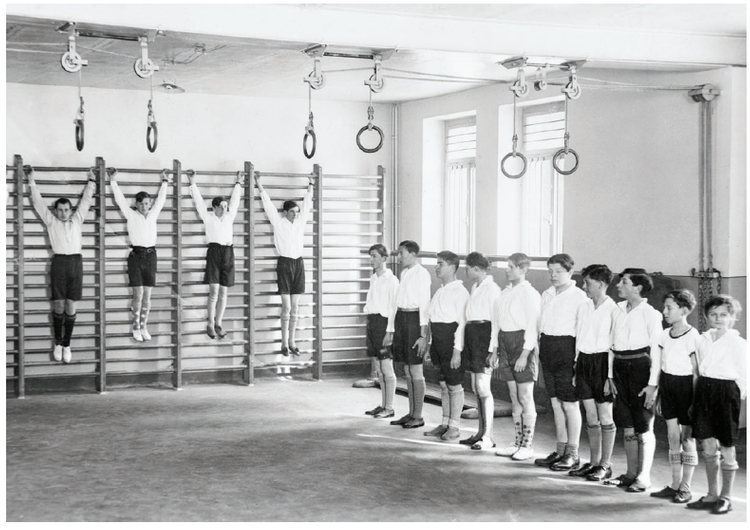
There was a large outdoor swimming pool, located where Montana's Biotop has been since 2001, that was thoroughly enjoyed, weather permitting, by the intrepid students. The pool had structural problems and did not last. Ostermayer, the next director,



Playing boccia, 1935, on the court left by the hotel. It was located, with its adjacent tennis court, to the northeast of the hotel grounds, where the primary school is today.



Montana's two tennis courts, soon after their construction, circa 1930



Before the Turnhalle was built, the gym was on the ground floor of Juventus.

would later point out the unfeasibility of a pool built in boggy ground and only usable for the few warm, sunny weeks of the year.

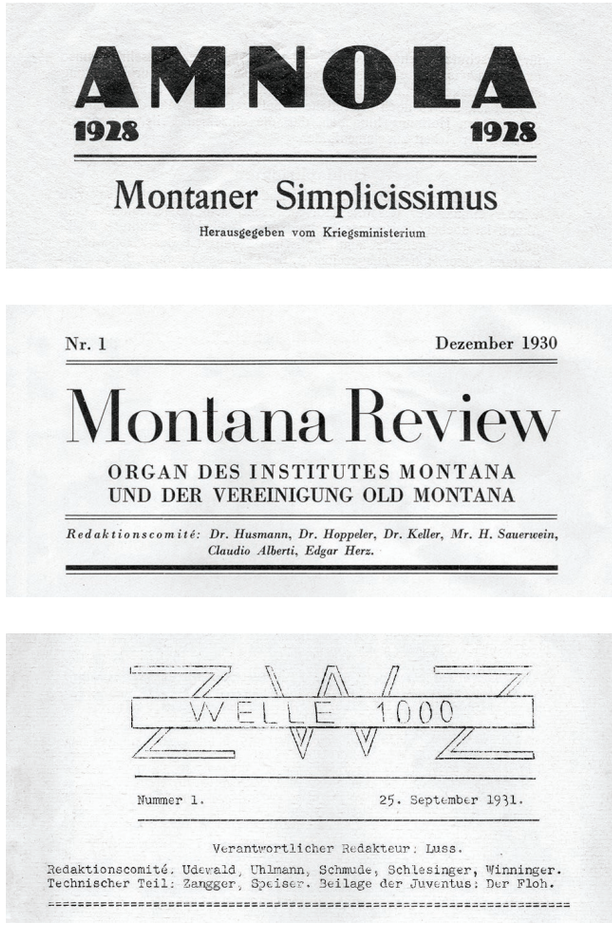
Sport was more than physical fitness and fun. It was about values such as honesty and fairness as well as important mental attributes such as strategic thinking and understanding your team members. As Sauerwein wrote about the moral component of sports education in the school magazine:

Honesty of character and brotherhood in combat, that self-control that allows even the defeated to lose with joy – we must adopt these qualities. Chivalry toward the opponent, insensitivity to enemy provocations, manly commitment and the admission of one's own mistakes – these are the qualities of the true sportsman!

School Magazines
As far back as the 1930s, the earliest school magazines were put together as a report on the school and as a learning opportunity for students.

AMNOLA, its name based on the early houses AMerica, NOrdica LAtina, ran to four editions of which we are aware and was a vehicle for school satire. There was another leaflet called *Montana Review* whose subject seems mainly to have been sport. *Z. Welle 1000* was a student newspaper first published in September 1931. Its aim was to produce something substantial in good German, not the trivia in "newspaper German" found in too many other publications. It feels like a precursor to the *Montanablatt* a few decades later. Its pages reflect school values, as in a heartfelt paragraph on "Kameradschaft und Freundesglück" by student Georg Michanowsky who celebrated the loyal comradeship that shines brightly as the true Montana flag.

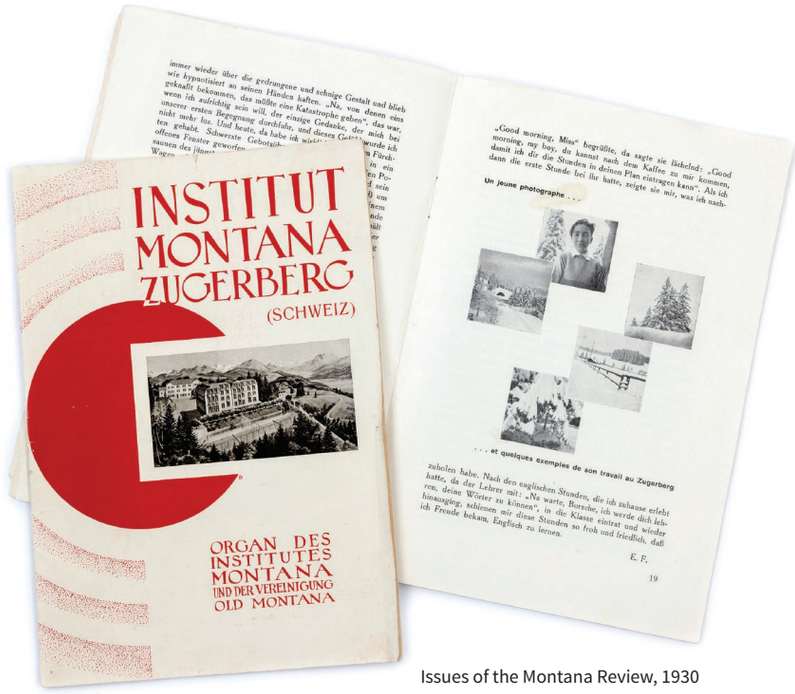
A 1931 survey of students in the magazine asked what they most loved about their school. The characteristics cited by most of the respondents were:
The environment away from smoky cities in the beautiful woods
Camaraderie – between the students and with the teachers
Sports
The flexible class system


AMNOLA
1928 1928
Montaner Simplicissimus
Herausgegeben vom Kriegsministerium

Nr. 1 Dezember 1930
Montana Review
ORGAN DES INSTITUTES MONTANA
UND DER VEREINIGUNG OLD MONTANA
Redaktionscomité: Dr. Husmann, Dr. Hoppeler, Dr. Keller, Mr. H. Sauerwein, Claudio Alberti, Edgar Herz.

Z. WELLE 1000
Nummer 1. 25. September 1931.
Verantwortlicher Redakteur: Luss.
Redaktionscomité. Udewald, Uhlmann, Schmude, Schlesinger, Winninger.
Technischer Teil: Zangger, Speiser. Beilage der Juventus: Der Floh.

The mastheads of three early school magazines: AMNOLA, Montana Review., and Z. Welle 1000



Issues of the Montana Review, 1930



Students and teacher Max von Rohr with their skis and sledges by the old Zugerbergbahn station, circa 1929.

The Spirit of Montana is breathed into life

Dr Salomon David Steinberg did not only give the school its name. He was a friend and colleague of Max Husmann and closely involved in the school's development. To mark its 10th birthday, he wrote a celebratory piece that explained how there had been hardships as well as successes, downs as well as ups. And yet, he wrote, the ten year mark was reached because of the school's inherent value base - the will to do good:

Wille zum Guten und Glauben an das Gute, das erfüllte sie immer und von ihr aus strömte es über in die Gemeinde der Lehrer, der Schüler und der Gäste, die sie vereinigte.

The will to do good and belief in good always filled the school, and from it flowed over into the community of teachers, students and guests that it united.

The Montana community, the Montaners, are like a "League of Nations" he continued. They enjoy the magic of their environment and they will grow with strength and happiness. This community was brought about by the will of one person, but it is more than will, Steinberg believed, it is goodness. He said:

Wir wollen aber auch nicht vergessen, dass es der Wille allein auch nicht geschafft hätte, dass viel Güte dazu gehört und dass im Willen ein Herz leben muss, ein liebendes und warmes Menschenherz.

We also don't want to forget that the will alone wouldn't have been able to do it, that much kindness is required, and that a heart must live within the will, a loving and warm human heart.

Max Husmann had set out with clear ideas about what he wanted to change about schooling and what he wanted to preserve. At the same time, he saw the project as a living organism that would develop as it learnt and as external conditions changed. Where that development would have taken it without the catastrophe that was already haunting the wings of the theatre of European politics, we can not say. But we do know that, already, the Spirit of Montana had been brought into life and it was awakened by kindness, warmth and the will to do good.

FIRST HAND ACCOUNTS OF MONTANA LIFE BEFORE WORLD WAR II

Beyond brochures, speeches and other school publications, we can seek different voices to add colour and texture to the picture of life at Montana in its earliest years.

A school-boys' paradise

The image that Montana wanted to portray was that of a happy school. That in itself was an innovative concept for a time when attitudes to youth were more about discipline. It then sought to capture that happiness on cine film with a vibrancy that was a technical achievement for the time, thanks to collaboration with Praesens-Film. It succeeded.

An article in the *London Swiss Observer* of 17th August 1929 reported on a presentation supported by one of these cine films. The reporter was impressed by the beautiful surroundings, the clean airy modern buildings, and how multiple languages were in everyday use so that both French and German are being used "naturally and playfully" by the boys in their daily lives.

In this school-boys' paradise it was a pleasure to see boys from 7 years onwards working and playing happily. Besides the playing fields, the well equipped workshops aroused special attention. Everything appeared so natural and pleasant as to give an idea of home rather than school.





Student Jules Kipgen entertains with a Settimio Soprani accordion, 1935.

Mr Meyer takes Husmann's dog Nassibu and the boys of Juventus for a hike, 1938.



Class outdoors, circa 1934

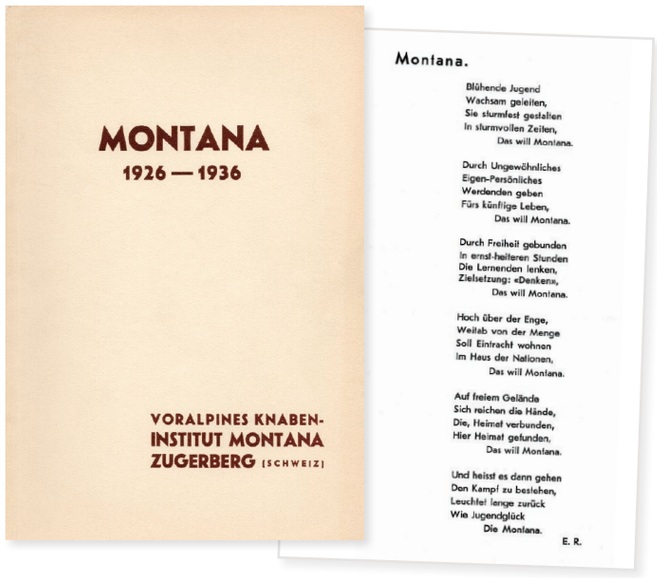
Subsequent iterations of the cine films show the boys and their teachers sharing lively exchanges in the classroom, on the sports field, on trips to the lake. The 10th anniversary film from 1936 has the first appearance of Husmann himself. We see someone with a light-hearted smile who loves a good chat. His dog Nassibu scampers in and out of the picture. There is a sense of joy.

Perhaps Husmann's personality had a lot to do with this enthusiasm. When the school was in its seventh year, in 1933, he summarised the ambitions that he was, by now, putting into practice on the Zugerberg. At the essence of a good education, he said, is the joy of youth. It needs the right sort of leadership and the right sort of leader is someone who is, like the students, young at heart. A student of the time concurs:

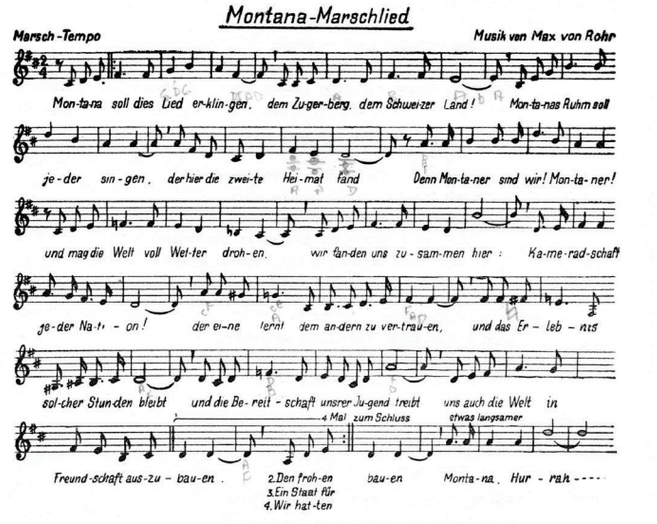
I was at Montana from July 1936 to June 1939 and I consider those years among the best in my life. My cousin Filiberto and I spent the last year at the Chalet and we had lots of fun. The founder of Montana was Dr. Husmann, an ex-wrestler and a wonderful person.
Extract from a letter by Carlo Crespi.

The view from Zug
The NZZ reported on the ten year anniversary of Montana in 1936:

Anyone who had the opportunity to celebrate the first decade of the pre-Alpine boys' institute "Montana" on the Zugerberg on June 28th had to admit that there was truly sufficient reason to adorn the first ten years of its existence with a wreath of remembrance and joy. During this period, the initiative and organisational talent of Montana founder Dr. Max Husmann not only completely remodelled a former summer hotel and adapted it splendidly to the many requirements of a large boarding school, but in this school, surrounded by magnificent nature and currently occupied by 120 pupils from all over the world, a spirit has been cultivated since its founding that seeks to realise the ideals of the League of Nations ideal in an educational setting.



The 10th anniversary booklet was a compilation of pieces written in French, German, Italian and English – also the first theme song, written by the teacher Max von Rohr.



Dr Max Husmann, in a series of 8 mm film stills from the school's 10th anniversary celebration, 1936.



Tolerance and warmth
Extract from a letter by Dr Günther Müller looking back at his Montana experience in the late 1930s:

In an atmosphere of unconditional tolerance, in an international community of students and teachers, with a daily routine that met my needs, a human closeness developed that I never experienced again (except within my immediate family). Even today, I draw strength from it when we meet up with the friends I made back then.

Isolation and friendship
As a student in 1939 /1940 Gerhart Hirsch, an Austrian-German from Vienna, found the school like a prison. In his autobiography under his pen name André Gorz, he described Institut Montana as a large yellow building overlooking a small village in a narrow valley with small individual rooms whose windows overlook the granite mass of a grey mountain that crushed you with its immutability.

The 18 year old boy felt he did not fit in - he was too German or not German enough, too Jewish or not Jewish enough - among the rich kids and their *snobbish values (jazz, movie stars, cigarettes, whiskey) of spoiled and abandoned adolescents, in search of emancipation.*

In 1936, Irish author James Joyce visited his brother Stanislaus in Zürich to help him to find a job. Through his contacts they came across a well-paid post at the school on top of the Zugerberg. However, on visiting the school: *when they reached it, the top of the mountain was extremely isolated. The town of Zug nearby looked as dull as it sounded. Stanislaus decided not to risk it, and James concurred.*

C.W. Olliver was an English engineer living at the Zugerberg Wirtschaft (already an ancillary common room for Montana staff and boys) while working in Zug. On arrival, he was most anxious about the proximity to a school full of boys that would doubtless disrupt his peaceful life. But not for long:

At first these neighbours worried me, then they enchanted me. I too learnt to appreciate friendship between races, among the teachers and the students. To the advantages of the Zugerberg, Montana adds life and youth, seeing everyone happy around you, one would be remiss not to be happy too. … Montana is unforgettable.



Scenes from the 10th anniversary celebration 8 mm film, 1936

Cyril Jalon

Born in 1919, Cyril Jalon was a Montana student from 1935 to 1937. We are privileged (thanks to alumnus Cary Harrison) to have a recording of a talk he gave at a dinner for Montana alumni in New York in 2014. It positively glows with his memories, some of which have been used to add depth to our account so far and more of which we shall explore here.

Cyril Jalon was a member of the house Olympia. Like his peers, he loved to play Fives, with its special gloves, special balls and its complicated rules. He remembered Beatrice Husmann, wife of Dr Husmann, not that she spent a lot of time on the Zugerberg. But she was absolutely memorable for her singing and for her extraordinary beauty. Frau Gutstein also retained a special place in his recollections for her kindness and for ensuring that the boys were issued with plenty of cookies. There was one female student who was a contemporary, whom he described as an attractive blonde Dutch girl. Many of the boys claimed to have some sort of "relationship" with the only young female in their vicinity, but the relationship of their claims with reality was tenuous to say the least. The young Cyril, however, kept out of this rivalry as he was happy to have a girlfriend in Zug. He recalled climbing through the darkness up the path of the Bahn (the funicular railway that connects the Zugerberg with Zug) after late night forays down to town. This is a time long before security cameras and locked doors, even before there was a John Mather (for readers unacquainted with Mr Mather, his impact on Montana boarding is legendary and you will meet him when we reach 1971) whose psychic powers detected your absence so that he would be waiting for you as you crept back into Grosses Haus. You could, we hear, get away with a lot back in the "old days".

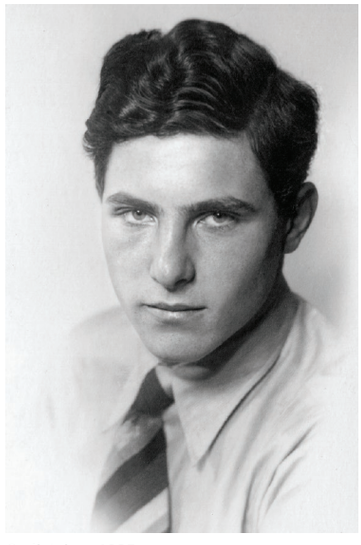
The Dutch girl would have been Anne de Jonge, Montana's fourth girl student, who had two brothers at Montana. She attended the school for about a year but her dossier, and those of her brothers, tell us nothing more and there is no record of them sitting for diplomas or Maturas (this is normal for the time).

Cyril Jalon's talk delivers interesting insights about Husmann and his mission for Montana. More than half the school population of the time was Italian. The Italian boys were taught in Italian and spoke Italian among themselves. Some of them also spoke French, so that was a useful language of communication, but learning Italian helped. Cyril did and was interested to find that, as they talked about the politics of the day, the Italians did not, as yet, understand "antisemitism" - neither the word nor the concept. This was very different to his friends who were German or Swiss. They were becoming nervously aware of what it meant, and, for many of them, how it felt. At Montana, however, the world could look different and Husmann worked to keep it that way. Cyril could remember the episode when the influence of the fascist government was reaching out its tentacles to demand that Montana Italians put on their black shirts. It was Husmann who told his students - enough of that - and sent them away to get changed. At Montana you had the sons of the old Catholic, aristocratic families of Italy who were friends with the son of the chief Rabbi of Rome, also a student. There was also the German student from Wittenberg whose father was Gauleiter (head of the local Nazi party) and turned up at the school one day to take his son to a soccer match in Zürich.

Casually, the son asked his father if he could bring his friends. To which his father replied that, yes, of course he could.

The three boys who accompanied the trip were from Jewish families who were in the process of escaping Germany and the Nazi party's persecution. They all enjoyed the soccer match together and cheered for Switzerland.

Reflecting on all this, Cyril talked about Husmann's conversion to Catholicism as, having at its essence, his interest in the possibilities of a universal organisation that was working, across borders, for the good of all mankind. It is an interpretation that aligned well with other sources, although they are sparse, about Husmann's life and work after Montana.



Cyril Jalon, 1935



Glacier exploring, 1938

An English "teacher" abroad

English author Rupert Croft-Cooke (who also wrote under the name Leo Bruce) was employed to take care of (not to "teach" - that was the responsibility of the qualified Swiss masters) the English boys at Montana in 1929 and 1930. In his memoir "The Last of Spring" there is a chapter called "The Delectable Mountain". That refers to the Zugerberg and his account of his stay is full of anecdotes about a multinational community of colourful boys and young men and their Swiss teachers. While it is certainly grounded in real life at Montana before the war, it is also a whimsical story not to be taken absolutely at face value. Throughout, Rupert, then 27 years old, expresses a strong sense of respect for Max Husmann, whose ideas about freedom he clearly supports.

Max Husmann:

Max Husmann was a very remarkable man. He was a dreamer with a core of practical good sense. He had not only the imagination to conceive of his Utopia but the shrewdness to make a success of it.

Max Husmann was himself a cosmopolitan. In person he was short and powerful with a face of great character, thick greying hair, wide nostrils, a grimly resolute jaw.

A powerful lecturer in several languages, he moved about Europe expounding his educational creed, putting forward his passionately held views on internationalism and the young and, through his henchman, a Swiss called Sauerwein, booking up pupils for the following term at fees which were, at that time, exceedingly high.

The school population was intriguing:

He had been most successful in Spain, Italy and Germany and from these three countries a majority of his pupils were drawn. The Spaniards were mostly of the old Royalist families, from Italy came another crop of titles, for Count Grandi's son was already entered, but Nino Usuelli, owner of the vast Borsalino hat factory, was also there with other future industrialists. From Germany came young Kloeckner, heir of the great Kloeckner steel works of Duisberg, and the offspring of several well-known capitalists including one of the Rothschilds.

England sent two brothers named Wingate whose father was said to be the King's oculist, and some commercial oddments, while the only representative of the United States was the diminutive son of John L. Balderston, part-author with J. C. Squire of the play Berkeley Square. One of the school's seniors, a young man in his twenties, was a sophisticated Russian Jew from Berlin, Max Niemetz, and there were other emigré Russians. From Belgium came the son of an Antwerp shipbuilder while the Chileans were of Basque origin as their names revealed - Echevarria and Irrarazabal. There was a group of Argentines, one whose name was Col of a well-known family, the others the four sons of a Galician emigrant who had made a large fortune and owned a department store. There were some Czechs, a Yugoslav or two, a trio of Austrians, but the blandishments of Max Husmann had never appealed to the French, the Hungarians or the Portuguese.

There were no age-limits among the pupils, toddlers of seven and eight having rooms to themselves like the young men of twenty or more.

Staff:
Rupert Crooke-Croft felt little affinity with the Swiss teaching staff. He described them as plodding worthy men who found dealing with this bunch of cosmopolitan young men a challenge:

So there was a great gulf between the dream and its realisation, between a visionary temple of international friendship and progressive education and the odd, undisciplined rabble of spoilt young men ignoring the earnest efforts of their Swiss pedagogues.

His verdict on Dr Keller (*tall and dark, an absent-looking man of some charm*) was, however, more favourable, perhaps because he was not only pleasant but also *unpedagogic*. He warmed less to Dr Hoppeler:



A chapter in "The Last of Spring" by Rupert Croft-Cooke tells the story of his year as a teacher at Montana.



Dr Husmann conversing with teaching staff, circa 1927



Classroom, circa 1931



Circa 1930

...fair, bespectacled and fussy, with thinning mouse-coloured hair, weak eyes, a busy self-important walk and a longing to be called Herr Direktor or at least Herr Doktor, who most keenly felt the sad short-comings of lnstitut Montana as a place of stern discipline, respect for instructors, earnest scholarship and well-drilled recreation.

Hoppeler would leave the school shortly after in 1934. Keller remained, however, until after the outbreak of war, leaving in 1939.

Frau Gutstein, Husmann's sister in charge of domestic arrangements and a direct conduit to Max when he was away, Rupert adored:

We at once became friends and remained so during my stay at Montana, facing intrigue and hostility from the Swiss teaching staff as firm and loyal allies.

Life was luxurious:
In other ways the Institut retained some of the life of the Grand Hotel Montana (sic) whose premises it occupied. The food, cooked in the hotel kitchens by a highly skilled staff and excellently served, was of a quality no Englishman could associate with schooldays.

Many rooms had their own bathrooms. Shoes were left outside bedroom doors at night to be cleaned by morning. The hotel lift was still working.



Dr Guido Hoppeler

Activities:
Sport of course, but also the Wirtschaft sounds like a school common room for teachers and boys:

The Wirtschaft at the head of the funicular was already a meeting point. ... a large room that was a bar, restaurant, writing room, lounge.... They were knocking back beer, playing cards and smoking in relaxation after a hard day's ski-ing and bob sleighing. At yet another table, apart both from the students and the peasants, were some of the Swiss teachers from the Institut, serious men studying the day's newspaper or playing a solemn game of Jass.

On his first evening:

If international fraternisation was part of Husmann's dream it did not appear that evening to be much realized, for the groups were strictly linguistic. A small mob of Italians, the noisiest and most animated, shouted in violent argument. "Porca miseria!" they bellowed at one another with fierce gesticulation as they discussed the merits of a football team. The Spaniards and South Americans were quieter and the Germans most staid of all, but young voices everywhere were strident; shrill, too, for some of the boys were no more than fifteen.

There was a natural tendency among the students to divide off according to nationality and language, a tendency that also emerged in the impromptu competitive football (soccer) matches that punctuated most afternoons after the snow had gone. Furthermore, in most national sections of the school there was a natural leader. However, the young English man did, with time, start to see Montana as a unique cosmopolitan community, if a somewhat haphazardly international gang. He recounts the sledge dash down the hill, where they ride all the way to the Stadtplatz:





Sledging, circa 1927 and 1930

Max (Niemetz) was the recognised leader at Montana; his face resembled the profiles in Egyptian murals. A young man more experienced and more worldly than I, he remembered pre-Revolutionary Russia and had lived since leaving it in Berlin. With a woollen balaclava over his head he lay on his stomach on a swift little sleigh called a flier, his feet caught in a longer sleigh behind him on which I sat with the Argentine Jesus Garcia, a tough athletic youth. Two more luges, manned by Spaniards and Italians respectively, would follow us down to Zug - a curious assortment of nationalities.

The destination was the Conditorei Keiser (written by the author as Kaiser), whose owner enjoyed the visits of this rather exotic group who never ran out of pocket-money.

That afternoon another of the senior clique at Montana, a pallid frail-looking youth who nevertheless was one of the best athletes in the Institut (Carlos de Villalonga), had come down by the funicular to bring his gramophone and records for the benefit of his friends and because he wanted to dance at Frau Kaiser's with a Swiss girl.

When time came to return, they all crowded, with the gramophone, onto the tram to the funicular:

Propped on the knees of Carlos de Villalonga the gramophone played on. The townspeople scarcely turned to look at this, for they were accustomed to the Montanese and the conductor made no protest. When they reached the funicular and crowded into the car the notice-board forbidding smoking reminded them to get out their cigarettes and the gramophone was started again.



A series of 16 mm film stills shows Montana students sledging down the Zugerberg, circa 1930.



Max Niemetz



Carlos Villalonga



Conditorei Keiser, the preferred Montana student hangout in Zug old town, at Neugasse 13, between Hirschenplatz and Landsgemeindeplatz



The Gheisman Incident

Among so many youths who in an English school would have been thought 'problems' it is discriminating to pick out one or another, but Boris Geissmann, a Russian from Berlin, was usually accounted wilful if not dangerous.

Gheisman (the spelling in the quote is Rupert Crooke-Croft's interpretation) was a loner and, left to his own devices, gave no trouble. But one of the Swiss teachers decided that it was his duty to insist on Boris' attendance in class. He knocked on the door of the boy's room to engage him in a serious talk. Not only did Boris refuse to open up but told the teacher - *Allez vous faire foutre!* Outraged, and in the absence of either Dr Husmann or Dr Keller, the teacher sought Mr Crooke-Croft who had a reputation for being able to deal with such boys.

My interview with the headstrong young man seems to me now symbolic of all human relations in that extraordinary place, but at the time I saw nothing preposterous in the notion of a twenty- seven-year-old Englishman usually more concerned with writing novels than with school discipline, pleading ardently with a stubborn spoilt young Russian emigré to make an apology to a good humourless Swiss teacher. I took it seriously. Boris laughed. Why did I want to involve myself? he asked. He had not insulted me and had no intention of doing so. Schönenberger was an ass.

Through the closed door, Rupert tried in vain a range of psychological strategies to persuade Gheisman to apologise, which was what the teacher wanted. None worked. He tried one final idea:

"It takes a strong man to apologize," I said.
"What's that ?" I developed the idea. Any fool could be insulting. Any weakling could refuse an apology. But an expression of regret took courage and would make stronger rather than weaker his coveted status as a school personality. It would show he was above malice, and really malice over anything so futile was absurd and undignified. Had he no sense of humour? That went home.

The apology was made next day with perfect politeness.

Summer on the Zugerberg:

The snowy winter gives way to the brilliance of spring then summer, and a different face to the Zugerberg:

There had appeared, as if suddenly created, a large swimming-pool, tennis-courts, football fields and gardens, while the Montanese had changed overnight from heavily booted skiers wrapped in highly coloured woollen pullovers and helmets to idling youths in flannels. More noticeable was that the taut silence had given place to a sound which rose and fell as naturally, almost, as running water, the perpetual tintinabulation of cowbells as the herds were driven up the mountain to their summer pastures and ambled slowly across the fields beyond the football ground.

Rupert's account paints a picture of snowy or sunny days with a focus on frivolity rather than learning, but that is probably a bit of artistic licence. He does admit to some teaching, and making use of novel methods to gain the attention of the Spanish students to whom he taught English in spite of the disapproval of the more conventional of the teachers:

I decided to take a gramophone into class and by letting them come and understand the words of fox-trots give them some familiarity, at least, with English idiom...
"I understand you play dance-music in your classes," said Doktor Hoppeler severely to me.
"The Montessori method," I told him with no less solemnity and he walked away looking pained.



Boris Gheisman



Boris Gheisman's 1st prize award, Fives tournament, Summer of 1930

Europe and politics in the 1930s:
Rupert also talked about the boys and their lack of interest in politics, but this is not reflected in school magazines of the time where there are well-informed pieces debating issues of the day (Z. Welle edition 4, for example, carries a student written discussion on the voting tendencies of the unemployed - towards the extremes it suggests, whether for the communists or the national socialists). At the same time, as a retrospective written in the 1950s, the memoir has the privilege of knowing what is going to happen:

In that spring most of the national groups had occasion to hear disturbing news from home, news which might have told us that such dreams as Husmann's were doomed, might even have suggested the degraded future of all politics. There was as yet no scent of war in the air though restlessness everywhere had grown intense since the world economic crisis of 1929. But the young men of Montana, secure in their parents' riches and prestige were mostly indifferent to public events at home.
...
The Italians, in that 'cradle of world peace' were the least critical of their regime. The sons of aristocrats or capitalists their parents had accepted Fascism as a stabiliser and had not recognised that it meant makeshift government at home and suicidal aggressiveness abroad.
...
The Germans were more interested but not much alarmed. In spite of the Nazi Party's six and a half million votes in last year's general election Hitler was not yet greatly feared. A freak, a political craze, a party which would soon disappear, Nazism was still considered in the large rich homes from which the Montanese came.

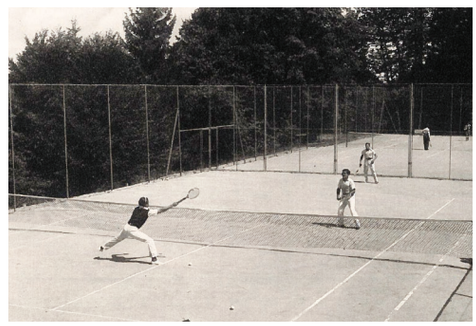
For now, this was indeed paradise. But...

All in all the Montanese played in the sunlight, which made the snow like powdered diamonds, and did not bother their heads with politics. Small good would it have done them if they had. Not more than half of them, I would guess, outlived the war, and the fortunes of even less survived it.

Freedom and responsibility:
Overall, it is clear that the young Englishman appreciated the Montana project and what Husmann set out to achieve. He was sceptical about the capacity of many of the teachers to put the rather unconventional methods into practice. When talking about Husmann's approach to punishment (Husmann was not a believer in punishment and certainly not corporal) he quotes him as saying: *Personality is what is needed. Boys should be led, not driven*. The implication is that leading not driving was a style that Husmann himself could use well, but that most of his staff could not. The reader of the "Delectable Mountain" comes away feeling that, ultimately, Rupert Crooke-Croft admired the experiment on the mountain:

As I watched them playing and posturing there I saw what seemed to me the real success of Husmann's scheme, though he was far from realizing it. These boys had freedom, almost absolute, to follow their own whims, to organize their communal life or not, to learn or neglect learning, and having freedom they did not abuse it.





Summer afternoons, Montana brochure, 1934



Long shadows of the morning and Nebelmeer
adorn the eternal Zugerberg panorama, circa 1930.



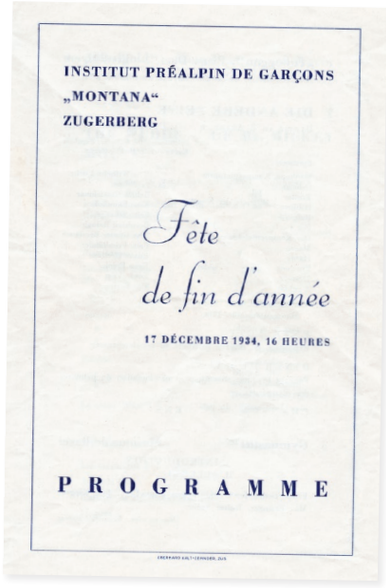
Theatre with a message

Montana has a long history of ambitious music and drama productions. In the 1930s, one of the lead teachers, Walter Keller, had the enthusiasm and the expertise to put Montana on the stage with performances that confronted big questions, emotionally and politically.

As 1934 turned to 1935, the end of year show was a production that was both lighthearted and a serious exploration of school values of pacifism and tolerance. As well as drama, there were piano recitals, a gymnastics display with music by Ravel, Italian songs, an exhibition of handiwork and a gala dinner. The performances were repeated at a charity event to raise money for needy children in Zürich at the "Casa degli Italiani" on 17th January 1935.

The first piece at the end of year show was "Journey's End", a play by R.C. Sherriff first performed in 1928. It became a British-American film the following year and a German film, "Die Andere Seite", in 1931. It was suggested to Keller by student Alexander Kretschmar (1933 to 1935) who had seen the play in pre-Hitler Berlin and was impressed by its pacifist message. It tells a harrowing story of life in the trenches, 1918, looking unflinchingly at the horror and meaninglessness of war, trauma induced alcoholism and broken friendships. As Kretschmar would later write:

Rückblickend recht makaber: Deutsche spielen in englischen Uniformen (vom Stadttheater Zürich!) nur ein paar Jahre vor dem neuen, schrecklichen Krieg! Das Datum sagt ja alles: es gab kaum einen Deutschen, der damals nicht wegen rassischer oder politischer Verfolgung auf der Montana war. Für uns war Montana weniger Schule, sondern Zuflucht, und für manche neue Heimat!

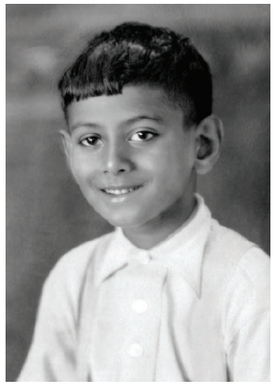


Theatre programme cover, 1934

Below: The cast of "Journey's End", 1934 (from left to right): Max Erzinger, Max Breslauer, Alexander Kretschmar, Fritz Luss, Karl Fuehr, Fritz Schmitz, Fritz Friedländer, Louis Vogt (Seated): Bernhard Balogh, Kurt Flandrak







Devy Mukherjee, 1933

The unmasked performers of "La Table Verte" taking a bow on the stage in the Dining Hall, 1934

In retrospect, quite macabre: Germans performing in English uniforms (from the Zurich City Theatre!) just a few years before the new, terrible war! The date says it all: there was hardly a German at that time who wasn't at Montana because of racial or political persecution. For us, Montana was less a school and more a refuge, and for some, a new home!

It was followed by light relief in a pantomime version of the popular novelty song "The Wedding of Mr. Mickey Mouse". The description in the NZZ report of the charity event brings it to life:

The greatest delight for the young and old audience was the incredibly funny dance and play scene from Mickey Mouse, presented by the Montaner "Juventus" group. There was even room on this not-so-large stage for a delightful wedding dance, in which the little Indian with his deep-black, blackberry eyes formed the charming centrepiece.

The evenings both closed with another demanding piece of theatre.

"La Table Verte" (The Green Table/Die Grüne Tisch) was a ballet grotesque, a dance macabre, by German choreographer Kurt Jooss and first performed in 1932. A group of diplomats (the Gentlemen in Black) gather round a green table engaged in fruitless negotiations. Subtitled "a dance of death in eight scenes", the piece is determinedly anti-war, a series of stark images of destructive impulses from which the figure of Death relentlessly claims its victims. However much the school might have softened the delivery (they set it to music by Tschaikovsky, more accessible than the original score by Fritz Cohen), the messages are clear.

In 1933, Jooss escaped Germany when the Nazis demanded that he dismiss Jews from his dance company. He refused, fled to the Netherlands and then settled in England. Montana was brave indeed to stage the piece in 1935.

The NZZ report of the charity event tells us that it closed with a singing performance by *Frau Dr. Husmann, who about ten years ago, as Beatrice Dart, was a gem of our opera ensemble.*

The "little Indian" mentioned in the news report was Dev Kumar Mukherjee (also called Devy). He was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in May 1927 and came to Montana in May 1933 when he would have been only six years old. He stayed until July 1936. His school records show a London address, so it might be that he attended school in Switzerland while his parents were posted to England. In the 1950s, under the name Dev Mukherjee, he was a notable cricket player back in India, playing for the south India state of Kerala in the Ranji Trophy tournament, the premier first-class cricket championship played in India. He died in 2017 in Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Innovation in Action

Max Husmann was enthusiastic about innovative teaching methods that made use of emerging technology.

The school managed to acquire a recordable gramophone. They made several discs, around the mid 1930s, with recordings of teachers and students speaking. There are also musical performances with instrumentation such as choir, piano, accordion in various styles including Charleston jazz style pieces. In one recording, Max Husmann recorded a poetic piece:

In diesen winterlichen Tagen des Übergangs,
da ein Jahr in die Ewigkeit stürbt und ein neues noch unerkanntes beginnen will,
steht der denkende Mensch wie in eine seltsame Stille gestellt,
wie in einen Raum zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft.
Eine tiefe Besinnung auf sich selbst erfüllt ihn.
Manchmal freudig, manchmal wehmütig, je nach der Fracht, die sein Lebensschiff erfüllt.
Und Gedanken entschweifen in Vergangenes und tasten sich zögern vor in unbekannte Zukunft.

In these winter days of transition,
as one year dies into eternity and a new as yet unknown one is about to begin,
the thinking person stands as if placed in a strange silence,
as if in a space between the past and the future.
A deep reflection on themselves fills them.
Sometimes joyful, sometimes wistful, depending on the cargo that fills the ship of their life.
And thoughts drift away into the past and tentatively feel their way into an unknown future.

We have not found the origins of the piece - a guess would be his friend the poet, Salomon David Steinberg, who gave the school its name. But it is merely a guess.

The opportunity to record yourself speaking and to listen back to the recording was a revolution for language learning. The 10 Year Jubilee report on the school tells us about *Unser Mikrophon*, a teaching strategy that not only made use of state-of-the-art technology of the recordable gramophone machine and discs, but enabled learning to be personalised:

There is an already famous method of learning foreign languages through a series of ready-made records. We can do more: prepare the record that suits each pupil individually within the record that helps them overcome the difficulties they are struggling with. Or we can let him speak in the foreign language himself. His own voice now reaches him from outside, and how much more critical he is now he hears mistakes that he never realised before. He compares with the disc, which reproduces the same text correctly, and his sharpened ear memorises the specific tone of the foreign language. As often as he wants, he can hear it again and again.

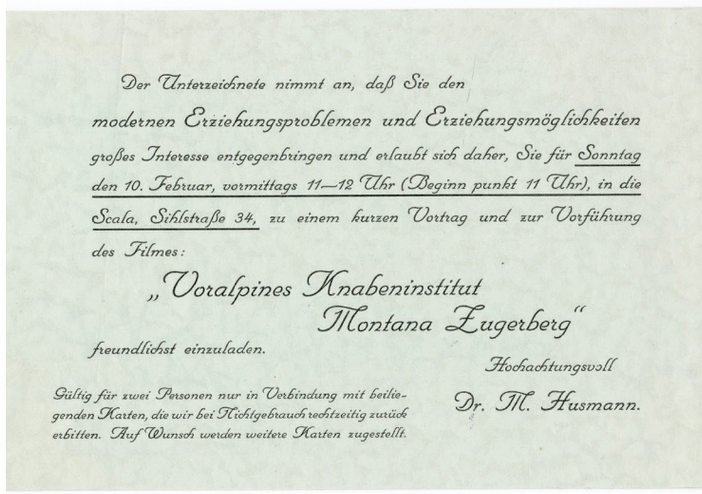


One of several instantaneous disc recordings made with a recordable gramophone at Montana, circa 1935

Praesens-Film connection

A promotional cine film was an exciting new way to publicise his new school and Max Husmann had connections with some of the very best. Praesens-Film had already established itself by becoming the first Swiss film production company that created both feature films for film houses and also industrial films. Between 1926 and 1934, Husmann arranged for the company to work on several versions of the Montana film. Praesens sent its camera crew to the Zugerberg at different times throughout the year in order to capture all aspects of the school - the journey up the mountain, the facilities, the students in classrooms, lunchtime, workshops and during their afternoon sports.

The camera footage was captured on 35 mm film in a high level of detail (and, we may presume, at a high level of expense). Several versions of the film were edited: one with German intertitles, and other versions for French and English, and yet another version without intertitles. The various versions on 35 mm are each around 10 minutes long. However, there is an extended version on 16 mm film which runs for almost 30 minutes. The film has no sound but is enlivened by animations and inventive transitions created by Praesens-Film's Eduard Tissé. It was used by Husmann and his colleague Huldreich Sauerwein as they travelled round Europe to give presentations about the school and its mission.



Der Unterzeichnete nimmt an, daß Sie den modernen Erziehungsproblemen und Erziehungsmöglichkeiten großes Interesse entgegenbringen und erlaubt sich daher, Sie für Sonntag den 10. Februar, vormittags 11—12 Uhr (Beginn punkt 11 Uhr), in die Scala, Sihlstraße 34, zu einem kurzen Vortrag und zur Vorführung des Filmes:

„Voralpines Knabeninstitut Montana Zugerberg"

freundlichst einzuladen.

Hochachtungsvoll

Dr. M. Husmann.

Gültig für zwei Personen nur in Verbindung mit beiliegenden Karten, die wir bei Nichtgebrauch rechtzeitig zurück erbitten. Auf Wunsch werden weitere Karten zugestellt.

An invitation to a presentation in Zürich on modern educational problems and opportunities by Dr Husmann for which the promotional film was screened, 1929. Presentations such as these were given around capitals of Europe.





Above:
Lazar Wechsler, left, and Emil Berna, right
Image source:
Cinémathèque Suisse



Right:
Walter Mittelholzer and his aerial camera



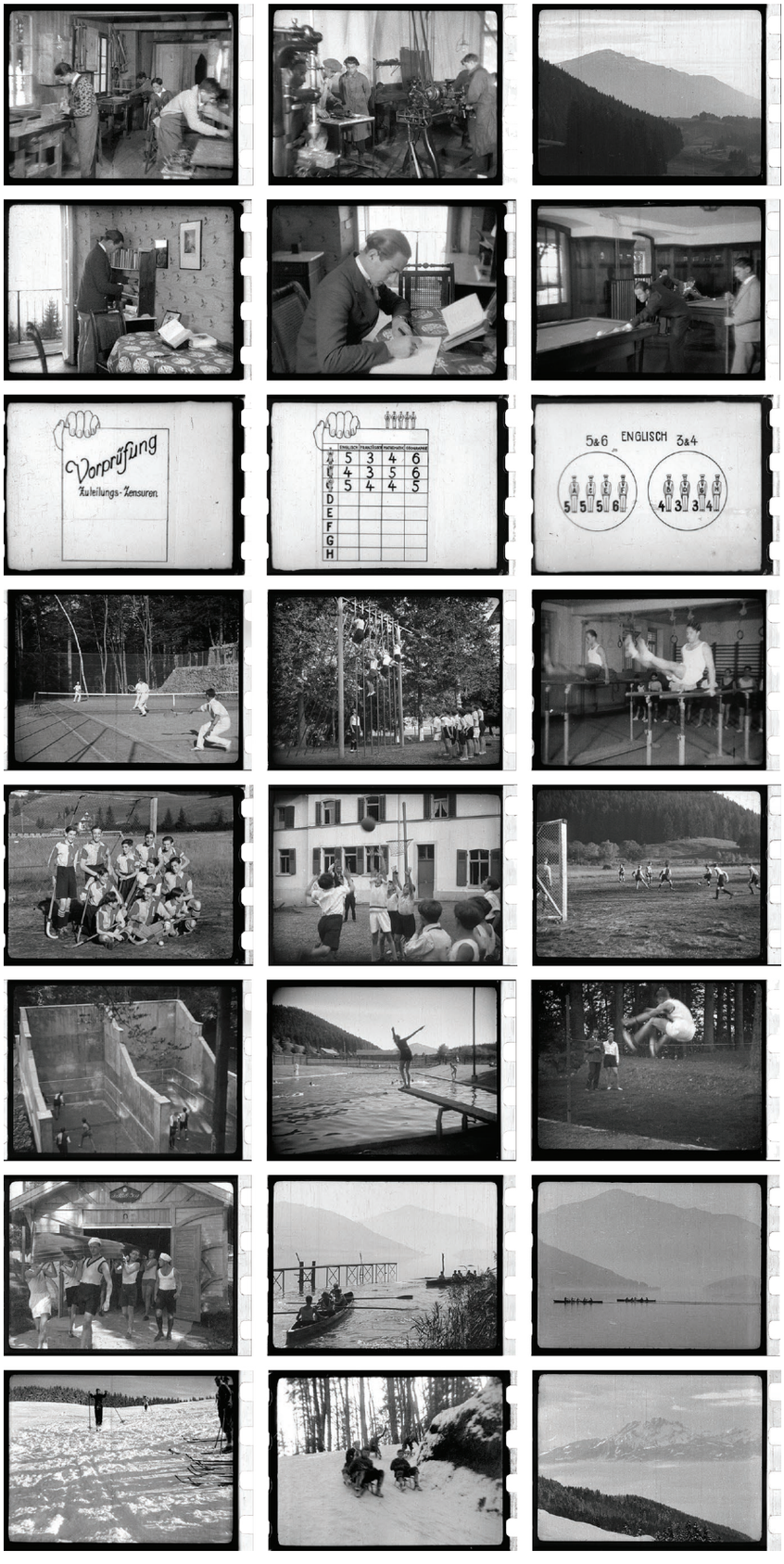
One of several versions of a 35 mm film showcasing Montana produced by Praesens-Film, between 1929 and 1934

The success of Praesens-Film was largely thanks to the creative genius of the group of cosmopolitan, anti-fascist Jewish exiles whose productions are a central part of Swiss cinema. They include the renowned Soviet filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein and Eduard Tissé. Along with Husmann's Minerva colleague Lazar Wechsler, Praesens-Film's other co-founder was Walter Mittelholzer, pioneering aerial photographer and adventurer. In 1926, he was the first person to fly in a seaplane from Zürich to Cape Town. In 1930, he flew over Mount Kilimanjaro. He would send images of his adventures to the Swiss press while he was travelling, thus increasing public awareness of civil aviation and, it is claimed, driving the founding of the national airline that came to be Swiss Air, of which he is sometimes claimed as a co-founder. Mittelholzer was killed in a mountain accident in Austria in 1937. Praesens-Film, however, celebrated its 100th birthday in 2024.

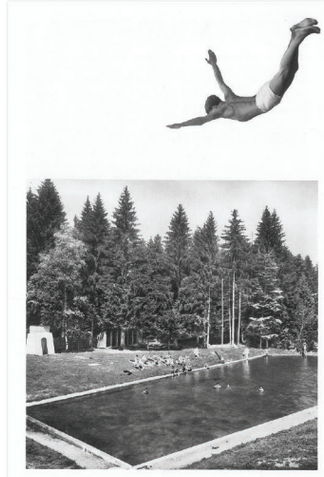


Right:
A series of 35 mm film stills from Montana's promotional film, 1929-1934

Far right:
Montana also relied upon photography and innovative imaging techniques to promote itself. An examination of glass negatives with painted-on masking from Montana's archive reveals the darkroom and printing trickery which was used to isolate and superimpose students onto a white page within a brochure, 1934.


Vorprüfung
Zuteilungs-Zensuren
5&6 ENGLISCH 3&4



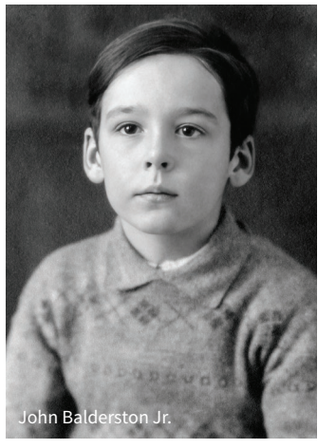






STORIES OF SOME OF MONTANA'S EARLIEST STUDENTS


Hans Caminer


John Balderston Jr.


Alexander Kretschmar


Hans Bucher

Hans Caminer

Hans was among an influx of boys from Germany whose parents chose Montana in the early 1930s. Many, but not all, had Jewish backgrounds. It was before National Socialism had stamped its boots on German society but already an openly non-denominational school could be an attraction to Jewish families at a time when many schools were affiliated with the Christian church. Correspondence between Montana and Hans' father suggest that his parents were interested in the individually tailored curriculum, a healthy environment, the opportunities to learn English and to continue hebraic studies, and a boarding school that would help their lively son to focus.

Hans, born in 1922, was ten years old when he arrived on the Zugerberg. He was quickly recognised as talented and his health improved significantly, a result attributed to the benefits of the fresh air. His parents were informed that he performed and achieved well in all subjects. As well as classes in English, geometry, history, calligraphy (penmanship), natural history and French, he had joined lessons in Hebrew and Judaic history. He showed special aptitude for arithmetic and geometry and the school was happy to inform his parents that he would be promoted to the higher class.

By 1935, he was with older colleagues in many lessons. His report describes him as an independent thinker with a strong character. In 1936, he decided that his interests lay in history and languages, although he continued to achieve well in maths and science. He was in good health, presented no discipline issues and was courteous with his teachers as with his colleagues. In 1937, the school suggested that Hans take classes in English and prepare for English university entrance - his parents are interested in the idea - and the flexible class system allowed Hans to follow this path. It turned out a fortunate step to have taken. In 1938, the Caminer family fled Germany and withdrew Hans from Montana. They were some of the lucky ones. It was shortly before the "Kristallnacht", when broken glass from properties of Jewish families crashed into streets in towns across Germany. The future for a German/Jewish family in Berlin was already bleak.

The Caminers settled in New York and Hans became a pupil at a prestigious school, Dewitt Clinton High. Montana wrote a letter to the school to introduce Hans describing in detail his academic attributes, his thirst for knowledge and his sound character. His studies in English leave them confident that the can continue at school in America. The letter ended affectionately:

With our best wishes for the boy's future,
we beg you to be kind to him.

In New York, as fitting with his new life, Hans adopted the name Jack. In 1944, just out of school, Jack Caminer joined Camp Ritchie, America's first centralised college for intelligence and psychological warfare. Recruits, many from Jewish families who had fled Germany, were selected for their fluent German language, understanding of European culture and high IQ. They went through an intensive 8-week training course where they learnt the skills needed to interrogate captured enemy soldiers and then were sent over the ocean and into action.They came to be known as the "Ritchie Boys", dispersed and embedded among US Army troops where they could assist in translation and gathering intelligence. In 1945, as a Ritchie Boy, Jack Caminer returned to Europe, now a soldier in the American army. That spring, during the final stages of the war, his unit travelled across Germany and Austria. They took part in the liberation of the Ohrdruf concentration camp, the first of the camps to be unlocked by the Americans and close to Buchenwald from where a group of refugee teenagers was soon to be sent to the little mountain outside Zug. That same place where Jack, then Hans, had spent some happy years of his childhood.

Jack Caminer lived the rest of his life in America. He died in April 2002 aged 79 in Carlsbad California. His wife Frances, whom he married shortly after returning from the war, donated to the United States Holocaust Museum a set of photographs taken by Jack while travelling with his unit in 1945.

John Balderston

John Lloyd Balderston Jr., known as Jackie, arrived at Montana on 9th January 1931 just before his 8th birthday. He was born in London of American parents. Home was a smart address in London's SW7, an elegant white stucco house in Knightsbridge on the square just behind Harrods. John Balderston senior began his career as a journalist, working as a European war correspondent during World War I and then based in London for American publications from 1920 to 1931. At the same time, he started to write plays, achieving some success in London during the 1920s, notably for "Berkeley Square", until his plays "Dracula" and "Frankenstein" were used as the basis for Hollywood movies. California beckoned.

The decision to send young Jackie to school in Switzerland was taken while the family still lived in London. Correspondence between his parents and the school indicated that they had researched the education they believed would benefit their son and had found it at Montana. Balderston's father described his personal approach to discipline, which was based on explaining the reasons for rules and an abhorrence of physical punishment:

It is because I think this method of education is more in keeping with your ideas than those of most English schools that I have sent him to you.

Montana encouraged parents to send detailed information about their sons – their academic aptitudes and learning style, their physical health and behavioural traits. Balderston father's correspondence is full of psychological detail and, as befitting his profession, is especially rich, spreading over several pages and culminating:

The chief trait about him that I have noticed is his imaginativeness, his quick response to anything that appeals to his intellectual curiosity. I am sure it will be your pleasure to develop this.

Soon after his arrival at the school in January 1931, parent letters are thanking the school for the care and kindness towards their son in his first weeks in new surroundings. Mrs Balderston pays Jackie a surprise visit (surprise to Jackie - the school collaborated with her plan) and writes to say how happy she was with John Balderston Jr.'s health, academic progress and the entire school atmosphere. The school also collaborates in organising the wireless radio that is Jackie's birthday present from the parents:

Your birthday present aroused great attention and made Jackie beam with happiness. The wireless is working extremely well and he can easily get the English stations in the evening.

In 1931, his father's career took off dramatically after the screen adaptation of "Dracula" premiered with a screenplay written by Jackie's dad. For some time the family address was still Knightsbridge but they were spending more and more time in the United States. By the end of the year they regretfully removed their son from the school. They didn't want him to be so far away.

Jackie continued his education in the United States and went on to study physics. By his early 20s, in wartime, we find him as a nuclear scientist at the Oak Ridge top secret research centre where he worked on the Manhattan Project – enriching uranium. In November 1945, his father was in correspondence with Husmann:

My son was delighted with your letter which I sent to him at Oak Ridge, and is now I am glad to say one of a group of some 200 technicians who are starting, or about to start, nuclear research at the Oak Ridge plant for peaceful purposes.

Oak Ridge was effectively a secret city, where over 80,000 workers contributed to the project to create the atomic bomb. Many of them had no idea of the goal of their work. But some, presumably an inner circle of crucial scientists, did. Not all of them were happy about it. John Balderston was one of them.

He and three colleagues at Oak Ridge were behind the Letters on World Government Project. They wrote to 154 leaders in sciences, culture and politics (the list included Albert Einstein, Nils Bohr, Thomas Mann, Herbert Hoover and Bing Crosby) seeking input on proposals for a world government tasked with controlling atomic power. The responses, over 100, were published as a report. Scientists, especially those working on atomic power, were recognising the potential catastrophic consequences of the nuclear bomb, the inevitability of nuclear proliferation and its potential to hold the world hostage.

With a strong sense of responsibility, and believing that collaboration and cooperation would be the only way to avert eventual nuclear disaster, they sought to influence government and public to see it that way too. Albert Einstein agreed passionately with the proposals, unlike his usual approach of keeping out of public discourse.

However, the idea of deterrence held sway, an atomic arms race set off and accelerated, and the climate of suspicion and antagonism that pervaded the Cold War years stifled post WWII idealism. It seems to have crushed also the scientists' aspirations for a form of world politics that might control the potential of their creation to bring catastrophe.

Jackie's father went on to write the scripts for a series of blockbuster horror films including "The Mummy" and "Frankenstein".

And see here for some tenuous connections! Perhaps "The Mummy" was informed by John Balderston's luck as a foreign correspondent to cover the opening of the tomb of King Tutankhamen in Egypt in 1922, years before he wrote the screenplay of "The Mummy". And of course, Mary Shelley originally wrote "Frankenstein" while she was in Switzerland and the movie was released in 1931, the same year young Jackie found himself in Switzerland.

Alexander Kretschmar

Alexander Kretschmar attended Montana from 1933 to 1935. In later life he became the owner of a hotel on the Augustinerplatz in Cologne. At school, he was involved in the theatre productions of those years and later wrote about the evil of National Socialism as it spread across Germany in his childhood:

Today I know that it was largely Montana's influence that kept me from sympathising with this policy, and it was Montana's open-mindedness that always served me well on my path as a hotelier. One of my fondest memories is of a play performed at the Institut and in Zug. Dr. Keller directed it. It was the magnificent English play "Journey's End" with a strong pacifist message. Fred Luss acted in it, and B. Balogh and I wore genuine English uniforms, and the performance was a success. No one suspected that for most of us, "playing soldiers" would soon turn into years of bitter work.

As we know, come the war, Montana students would find themselves on different sides of the conflict and Alexander would swap his English stage uniform for that of his home country, Germany. But the telling of his story conveys the profound impact that attending Montana had on him. In 1944, he became a prisoner of war, as related in correspondence with the Head of his old school:

Canada, December 8, 1944.
Dear Doctor Husmann!
You will be very astonished to have some news from me. Having been captured in Normandie a few months ago, I am now in Canada. In all the years I have never forgotten the old Montana and the wonderful times spent there.
Alex Kretschmar.

From Canada, Kretschmar, still a POW, was transferred to England.

Prisoner of War Camp, April 15, 1946.
Dear Dr. Husmann
I received a letter from you in Canada, which was a very special joy for me. At the time, everything was still quite bleak. Montana protected me from Nazism. Please try to write to me now and then.
Warm regards.

The camp in which he was interred was by Featherstone Castle in Northumberland, England. Italian and German prisoners received a course in "denazification" but life was not too harsh. Prisoners would work in the local community (such as helping at nearby farms) and received lectures from academics from Newcastle, Durham and Oxford. The camp had a bakery, a theatre, a library, chapel, classroom and three orchestras. Prisoners were even allowed to attend the local village dance on a Saturday night. Husmann replied several times to his former student, including:

June 8, 1946
Dear Achim,
I received your card dated April 15. Comrades from Italy inquired about you, and I wrote to them that you are still alive. I hope that the time of your discharge is not far off. Should I be of any help to you, please let me know.
With best wishes and warmest regards,
Your Dr. Max Husmann.

Hans Bucher
"Hans" (real name Giovanni Enrico) Bucher was among Montana's first students in 1926. He was born in Milan and a citizen of both Italy and Switzerland. He went on to study law in Zürich after school and entered the Swiss diplomatic service in 1943. That was the start of a brilliant diplomatic career that sent him all over the globe: Bombay, New Delhi, Paris, Baghdad and Lagos. He was known for bold ideas, personal courage and unstinting optimism, qualities that would serve him well on an unplanned adventure in Brazil.

He served as Swiss ambassador in Río de Janeiro from 1965 and was kidnapped by an underground militia, the Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária, on 7th December 1970. The kidnappers' demands were all directed to the Brazilian government so Switzerland could do very little to secure their ambassador's freedom. But Brazil conceded, releasing 70 prisoners from Brazilian prisons, and Bucher was delivered back to safety on 16th January 1971. He had spent 40 days blind-folded while in captivity. He would, bravely we believe, continue his diplomatic mission, serving in Japan and Portugal, until retiring back to Italy where he died in 1992.

THE WAR YEARS

"A force for good in a time when nearly all force was evil."

The approach of war

Another outbreak of international conflict was exactly what educators like Max Husmann dreamed of avoiding. But this one, that came to be called World War II, happened so quickly after the last round of brutal fighting. The imbalance of the geopolitical contracts that closed the previous war in 1918; the grievances and hatred they had woven into the fabric of a fragile peace; an ideology driven by an evil individual. The outcome - another war.

Institut Montana had the advantage of relative seclusion, geographically on its little mountain and politically in a country that was positioned as neutral. But its situation, like that neutrality, was complex.

In the 1930s, the number of German boys arriving at the school, many of whom were Jewish, increased. There were others, as institutionalised antisemitism spread, arriving from Eastern Europe and Italy. The school's reputation for an enriching educational programme in a tolerant environment was attractive to many families. It was also a place of sanctuary as the clouds gathered. Walter Unterberg was one. In 1938, after the Nazi invasion of Austria and the denouncement of his Jewish family to the authorities, Walter, his mother, and his cousin, fled Vienna via Italy to Switzerland, taking a perilous route to avoid more dangerous territory. His uncle had professional connections with Max Husmann so they contacted him in Zürich. The 13-year-old high school student from the Realgymnasium in Vienna became, for a short time before continuing to safety in England, a student at Montana.



Advertisement for the summer vacation course which took place just two months before the outbreak of World War II.



Dr Husmann and his dog Nassibu with summer vacation students from Holland, July, 1938



In 1985, Alex Kretschmar captioned this photo: "For all those who remember the years between 1933 and 1936, those years that grew ever darker in Germany. Montana was then a beacon of light on the map of Europe – an international meeting place for freedom." Montana students would gather together like this to listen to news reports of the political tensions growing across Europe. On the table are playing cards and two jerba mate tea pots with bombilla/metal straws. From left to right: Heinz Unger, Hans Wolf, Fred Süss, Alexander Kretschmar, and Mr. Witty

The gathering clouds were darkening and school numbers dropped quickly. The Austrians left with the German invasion of Vienna in 1938. Between 1937 and 1941, the records show that 19 of Montana's Jewish students had their German citizenship revoked and a number of the German Jewish boys managed to move to the United States with their families. They were the lucky ones.

At the same time, the Italian section at Montana was on its own difficult journey. As we have seen, it was set up and granted recognition from the Italian government in 1933 on condition that it was led by a government appointed teacher. As fascism secured its grip on Italy during the 1930s, the Italian government demanded that it became increasingly politicised. It was required to organise military style parades, to salute Mussolini and to support antisemitism. At the same time, numbers of Italian Jews at Montana were growing as the Fascist government had forbidden Jewish students from attending Italian schools. The Head of the Italian Section was Professor Dr. Ermenegildo Lambertenghi. In spite of the danger it could incur, he refused to apply these rules. Max Husmann, despite his connections with members of the Italian ruling class and wealthy industrialists, went into open battle with the Italian consul in Zürich, a story corroborated by the memories of former student Cyril Jalon (1935 to 1936). When the Italian consul demanded that all Jewish students be dismissed, Husmann refused and official recognition of Montana as an Italian school abroad was withdrawn in 1944.

Montana during the war

The school stayed open. Husmann not only saw the war coming but understood the potential of the Zugerberg as a safe haven. In 1939, he insured all the buildings and facilities. He brought in fuel for heating, groceries for storage, a dozen pigs and a few hundred hens.



Dr Husmann and Huldreich Sauerwein, circa 1939

Numbers of students are difficult to pin down but they seem to have decreased from around 222 in the year 1938 to 1939 to only 100 at the end of 1939. In the school year 1940 to 1941 there were around 70 students. At the end of 1945 it was approximately 40. They were Swiss who did not have to travel across borders but had a place of safety on the Zugerberg. There were some Italians and a number of boys, mainly from Eastern Europe, who were unable to get back to their homes.

Many teachers left but there were a few who stayed and lessons of some sort went on. Herr Max Schiess, a maths teacher, taught all the sciences as well as German and Spanish to the Italians. Herr Albrecht (a remarkable specialist in old languages such as Old English and Old Persian called by students "the Sir") taught English, Latin and Greek. An Italian teacher who arrived in 1942 and stayed throughout the war, Igea Buzzi, was known for her staunchly anti-fascist views. She would remain teaching at Montana until her retirement in 1961. Schiess was also in charge of food rationing and had to ensure that there were always enough coupons to feed everyone while his wife Ida looked after domestic arrangements. The head cook Sophie Braun and the head secretary Berti Keller remained at the school.

Felsenegg was requisitioned by the Swiss military in 1939 and anti-tank barriers and gun emplacements were installed around the building. All the students and teachers lived in Grosses Haus which no longer offered the luxuries it had in peace time. For most of the war the Chalet stood empty. Juventus was mainly abandoned except for a few families with small children, refugees from military refugee camps, to whom Husmann had offered sanctuary and who remained until after the war (sadly, we know no more about these families nor who they were).

Wartime experiences on the Zugerberg

The following are extracts from reminiscences of former Montana students who stayed at the school during the war years. They were collected by Montana student Sabrina Bleuler (graduated 2006) for her IB studies, supervised by her history teacher Wendy Martens.

Peter Hajnal

Most students followed the events of the war closely, hoping for a defeat of the German armies. The Swiss teachers had to go into active service, and the substitute teachers were often not very good, which negatively impacted the quality of instruction.

The main concern was for family members in the war-torn countries. There was also a large Swiss military presence on the Zugerberg. We weren't actually afraid, but we were worried that the Nazis might attack Switzerland militarily, especially in 1940 and then again towards the end of the war. For some of us, an occupation would have meant death in a concentration camp. Some students, especially German and Austrian ones, actually had to return to their home countries to perform military/auxiliary service, under pressure and threats from the German authorities that their families would otherwise suffer. Some Italian students made their way to the partisans in northern Italy.

Augusto Segre

One of the students came from Prague. He was Jewish (like many of the students). His name was Altmann. He could no longer get money from his family, and Dr. Husmann found him a job in Zug. He went to work in the morning and returned to Montana in the afternoon. This allowed him to continue his studies without feeling like he was receiving charity as a penniless person.....I was able to stay longer (my family could continue to pay for me), but I was afraid to travel to Italy (I am an Italian Jew). So I remained in Switzerland almost continuously until 1947.

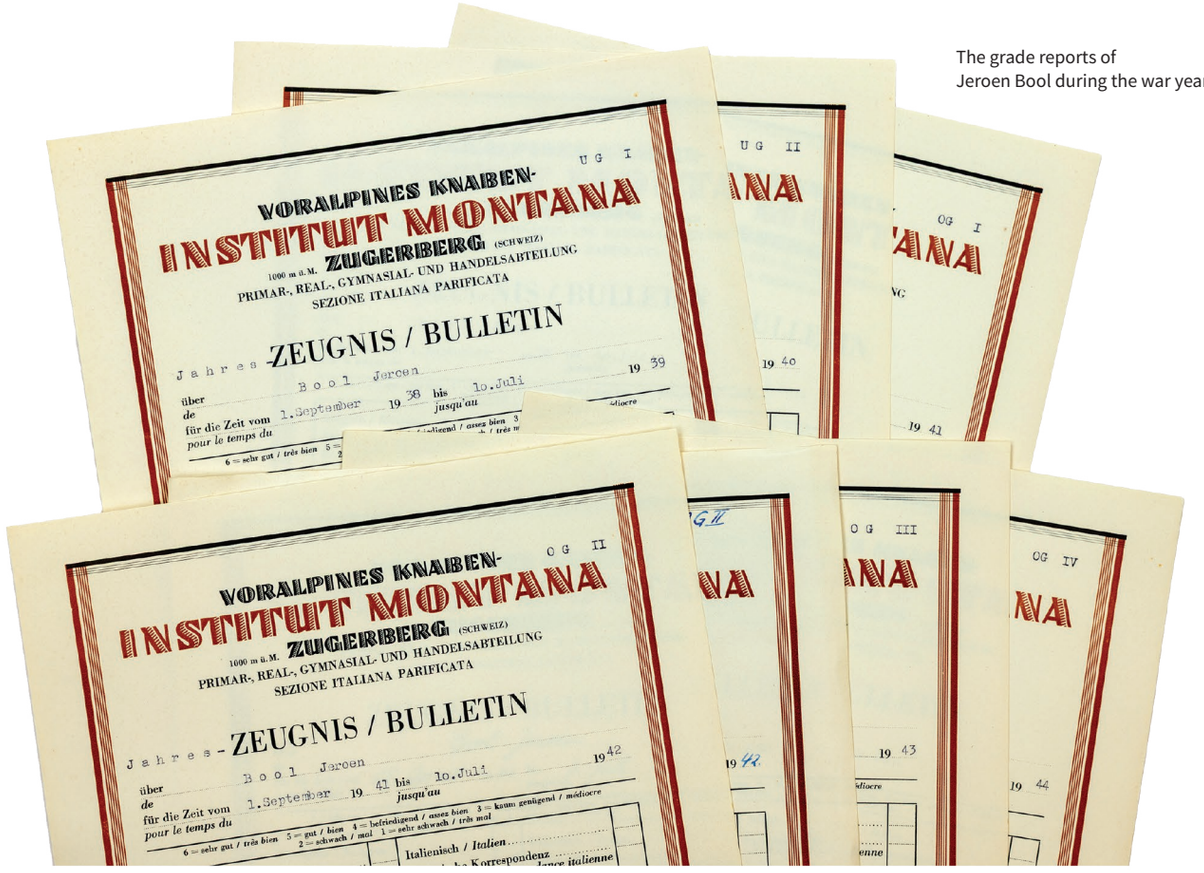
Jeroen Bool

After May 1940, when Germany invaded Holland, the approximately seven remaining Dutch people followed the events of the war daily and with great anxiety. Everyone had a radio in their room– something special back then! – and the news from Radio Oranje, the Dutch station in London, was a fixed point in the daily routine, especially at night when Queen Wilhelmina gave a speech from London.....

Among the students, as far as I remember, there were no discussions about Nazi supporters. Although I knew that the father of Werner Brandes, my roommate at Juventus from 1938 to 1940, was an important man in Berlin, his role in Germany was never discussed. My parents often visited Switzerland – quite unusual for that time – and we, a few friends of Werner Brandes, were then invited for a few days' holiday, for example at the Hotel Baur au Lac in Zurich or, in winter, at the Hotel Kulm in Arosa! I was amazed by the luxury during wartime.

Elio Matacena

I believe that the years I spent at Montana during the war changed my life, because I was, during the terrible years of destruction and privations, in a peaceful country avoiding the sad experiences of the war.



The grade reports of
Jeroen Bool during the war years

Max Husmann during the war

Husmann's personal position was complicated. There is a dossier of police reports stored in the Swiss Federal Archives that begin in 1941 when the head of police for Zürich was instructed to keep an eye on the owner and Director of Institut Montana. In a Switzerland aware of the insecurities of its position, the connections he had in Germany and Italy put him under suspicion. There were some grounds for concern - some of these connections were with members of the wealthy class who were supporting fascist leaders in both countries some of whom sent their sons to school in Switzerland. The petrol consumption of Husmann's large car, at a time of rationing, was also called into question. The head of police took the task seriously, trailing Husmann's movements and tapping his phone calls. However, his communications on these activities are weakened by words that betray deep antisemitism. His reports and surrounding correspondence are laden with references linking venality and Jewishness to corroborate his suspicions, describing his target as that *"Russian Jew", an "unsavoury character in that it's all about his own profit".*

Husmann's family had escaped growing antisemitism in Ukraine when Max was ten years old. They had embraced life in Switzerland, where they had family connections, and turned to Catholicism. But old prejudices (the very ones the school set out to address) could be active, especially in a small nation that was surrounded by war and in a tangle of problematic international politics. This, however, is more than a story about the assumptions of a local official.

La liquidation de cette affaire est urgente.

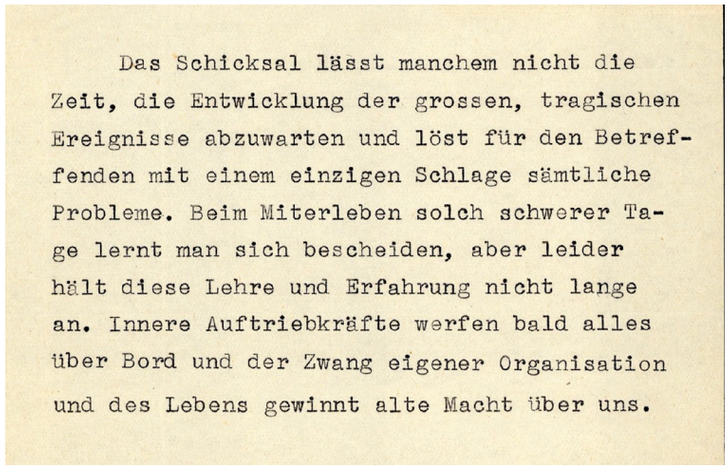
In February 1942, Colonel-Brigadier Roger Masson, head of Swiss military intelligence, wrote to Zürich demanding that the police officer call off his surveillance of Husmann. Yes, Husmann had contacts in Italy but he was not an enemy spy. He performed valuable services for Switzerland. Possibly riled by the accusations in the head of police's reports of profiteering, Masson was emphatic that these services were performed without renumeration - *à titre absolument bénévole.*

Husmann could have stayed safely cloistered on the Zugerberg throughout the war years but, when those contacts in Italy gave him an opportunity to try to stop the fighting, he took it. The 1942 communication from Masson tells us that Husmann was already performing services for Swiss military intelligence from early in the war. In February 1945, he received information that the German army in northern Italy might be persuaded to lay down their arms.





Husmann's postcard sending New Year's greetings to friend and mathematician Paul Bernays, January 1941. Image source: ETH Bibliothek, Hochschularchiv, Hs. 975: 2287



Das Schicksal lässt manchem nicht die Zeit, die Entwicklung der grossen, tragischen Ereignisse abzuwarten und löst für den Betreffenden mit einem einzigen Schlage sämtliche Probleme. Beim Miterleben solch schwerer Tage lernt man sich bescheiden, aber leider hält diese Lehre und Erfahrung nicht lange an. Innere Auftriebkräfte werfen bald alles über Bord und der Zwang eigener Organisation und des Lebens gewinnt alte Macht über uns.

In this excerpt of Husmann's typewritten personal letter to Paul Bernays, he ruminates, "Fate does not allow some people the time to wait for major, tragic events to unfold, resolving all their problems in one fell swoop. Witnessing such difficult days teaches us humility, but unfortunately this lesson and experience does not last long. Inner forces soon throw everything overboard and the constraints of our own organization and life regain their old power over us." Image source: ETH Bibliothek, Hochschularchiv, Hs.975: 2288



Major Max Waibel, Dr Max Husmann, and Baron Luigi Parrilli. Image source: Keystone/Novalis-Verlag

He contacted his friend and colleague, head of the intelligence gathering bureau "Nachtrichtsensammelstelle 1", Major Max Waibel. Together, they liaised with Swiss and American intelligence and drove through the negotiations with the German commander, General Karl Wolff, that achieved the first surrender in a brutal war that was uselessly prolonged. The task involved a punishing schedule, personal danger and all Husmann's powers of psychology and persuasion to convince General Wolff not to waiver from the path. The secret operation came to be called Operation Sunrise. It was the beginning of the end of World War II.

Although the Operation achieved its objectives and peace was signed at Caserta on 2nd May 1945, it caused controversy, especially in Switzerland. Amidst concerns about the implications of foreign intelligence services operating on the soil of a neutral country and about the ethics of negotiating with the enemy, news of Sunrise was silenced. Max Waibel was forbidden to publish his report of the operation and sent to Washington as a military attaché, effectively a scapegoat post for a former intelligence officer destined, at least for a time, for strategic obscurity.

There was unpleasant fallout also for Max Husmann. Swiss press in the immediate aftermath diverged wildly on their verdict, some citing him as a saviour and others as an evil fascist. *The Berner Tagwacht* in June 1945 called him "The Man with the Double Alibi". The piece raged about the school and its connections with families, especially in Italy, who were privileged and powerful and surely supported Mussolini. It claimed that German fascists were sending their boys to school on the Zugerberg to keep them away from the chaos they were causing in their own country. Its jibes at the *Weltwoche*, that had published an admiring piece about Husmann the week before, are suggestive of an ongoing feud between the news outlets.

But we know that Montana was a haven for Jewish boys escaping Germany, that Husmann battled with the Italian consulate about raising the flag of the fascist government, and that he employed a known anti-fascist activist in Igea Buzzi. While he had connections with Europe's wealthy elite, such as Baron Parrilli from whom he first received information that led to the secret operation, his actions during the war are entirely consistent with his mission of eradicating intolerance and of seeking peace.

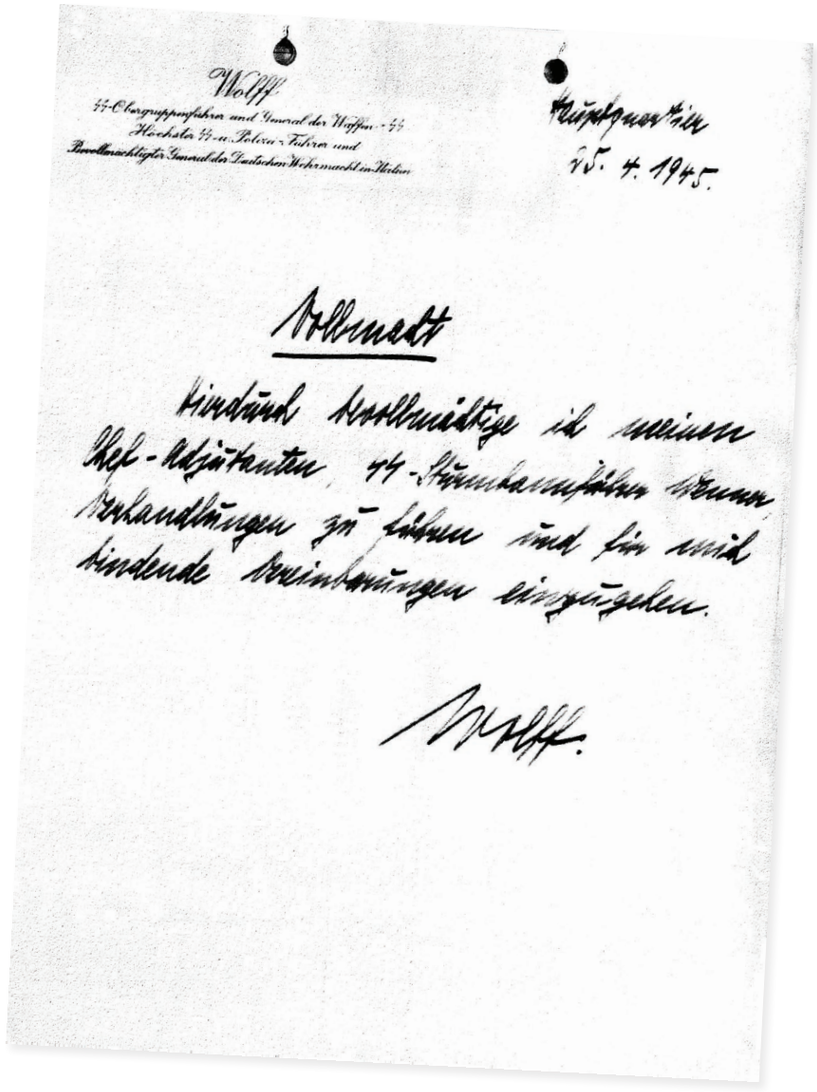
In October 1945, before the silencing of the story and only months after the end of the war, Husmann was corresponding with the father of a former student. The Balderston family had taken their son out of Montana when they moved to the United States following John Balderston Sr's successful screenwriting career to Hollywood. An article in an American newspaper had an account of Operation Sunrise which, for Husmann, contained inaccuracies. He questioned Balderston about other outlets that might be interested in a more authentic version. Balderston could not help but he did reply:

The Post is a popular paper with an enormous circulation and you know what that implies. Again, congratulating you on having been a force for good in a time when nearly all force was evil.

And Augusto Segre, one of those Italian Jews who found refuge in wartime on the Montana campus later recalled:

You are certainly aware of the importance of Dr. Husmann's peace work at the end of the German occupation of Northern Italy. When I once spoke to him about it in Rome (he was a guest of Baron Parrilli, father of a friend and fellow student of mine), he replied: "A modest work by a small man on a great mountain!"

It was on the 60th anniversary of the peace, in 2005, that Switzerland recognised Operation Sunrise and celebrated the achievements, posthumously, of Max Waibel and Max Husmann.



SS General Karl Wolff's Proxy of Surrender for northern Italy, 2 May 1945

As on 8 March, the two found themselves alone for a few hours in a train compartment…At the end of the conversation with Dr Husmann, Wolff said that he was going to his own headquarters and there he would "get rid of" anyone who placed other obstacles in the way of the surrender.

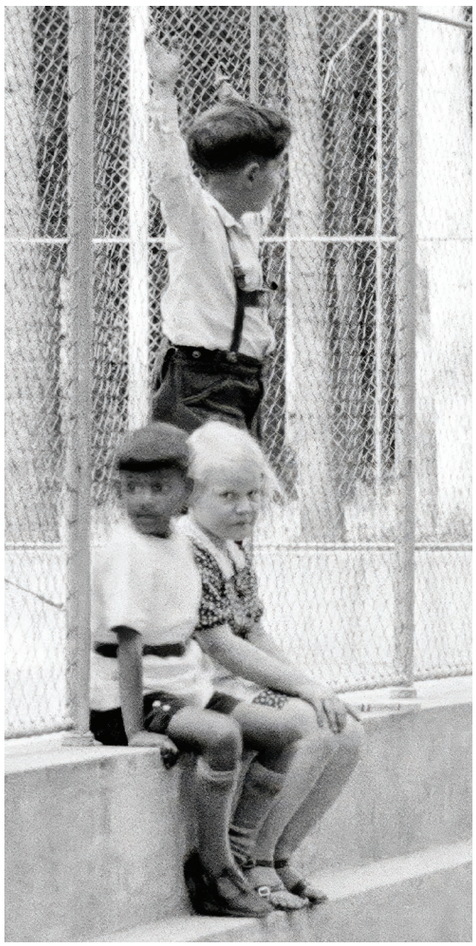
Max Waibel - Operation Sunrise: The Official Report of the Mediator, 25th April 1945

Victims and Survivors

There were students such as Hans Caminer whose families were able to escape Europe and begin new lives away from persecution. There were others who found a safe haven on the Zugerberg during the bleak years of the war. Augusto Segre from Italy and Stefan Altman from Prague would have spent dark hours of torturous worry about families left behind, but they were safe. There were others who were not so lucky.

We know of three who died in concentration camps. Montana's first girl, Ursula Berliner, was in the Netherlands when she was detained in 1942 and sent to Auschwitz where she was killed soon after, two days after her 17th birthday. There was Theodor Meyer who was imprisoned at Auschwitz and killed in 1943. John/Jean Lippman at Auschwitz II / Birkenau was killed in 1944. There might have been more.

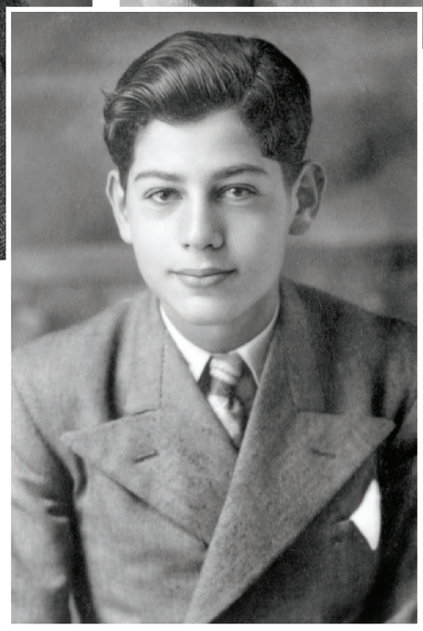
We also know of two concentration camp survivors among former Montana students: Bruno Sacerdoti and Charles Brahams.











Top to bottom:
Theodor Meyer, Jean Lippmann,
Bruno Sacerdoti and
Charles Brahams

Left:
Ursula Berliner

THE ZUGERBERG AS A SANCTUARY

The children from the concentration camps

When the war was finally over, the Zugerberg was used as a destination for children and young people who had survived concentration camps. After allied troops discovered the horrors that had been perpetuated behind those barbed fences, organisations like the Red Cross moved in to find solutions for the survivors. The Felsenegg building at the school on the Zugerberg had been recently vacated by the military and offered an appropriate site.

These summaries are thanks to Barbara Schmutz's piece "Was Man Erlebt Hat, Bleibt Im Kopf Drin" (what you have experienced stays in your mind) in the *Zuger Neujahrsblatt* 2008 and Ana Verhar's piece "The Importance of Remembrance" in Montanablatt 205 Winter 2016.

They arrived on a hot summer day. It was on 14th July 1945 that the first group of refugees arrived from the concentration camps. The Felsenegg building on the Zugerberg would be their space for rehabilitation after the horrors they had experienced.

They were 107 boys, mainly teenagers, who had been liberated from Buchenwald as American soldiers advanced across Germany in April. In May, after the war had ended, the relief organisation Swiss Aid asked representatives of the Allied Forces how they could help. It was proposed that they could accept displaced children and the "Buchenwald Action" was organised. They had anticipated the very young, not adolescents. But the survivors were those who had been useful for work in the camps. The little ones had been murdered.

Boys and girls travelled for 3 days by rail into Switzerland. At a reception centre in Rheinfelden they were "disinfected" - washed thoroughly with strong chemicals. Girls were sent to Neuchâtel and boys to Felsenegg on the Zugerberg. The building had been left in a filthy shambles by the departing soldiers.


Nicht falten!

Zuger Berg- und Straßenbahn № 13739

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SCHWEIZ. ROTES KREUZ, KINDERHILFE
für STATION MÉDICALE
Heim „Felsenegg"

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Es werden für jede Fahrt und pro Person (auch für Kinder von 4—16 Jahren) entwertet: Straßenbahn: 1—2 ganze oder angebrochene Teilstrecken 1 Feld; 3—4 Teilstrecken 2 Felder. Seilbahn: Bergfahrt 4 Felder, Talfahrt 3 Felder. Siehe Rückseite!

Transit punchcard for the Zugerbergbahn and Zug city trams, Summer 1945
Image source: ETH, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte: NL Charlotte Weber / 85



Scrapbook sketch by Michael Urich
Image source: ETH, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte: NL Charlotte Weber / 85

The Red Cross had hired caregivers to look after the traumatised young people soon to arrive. Their first task was to clean up all the rubbish left by the soldiers.

Charlotte Weber, one of those caregivers, described the arrival of the group of *"young men? Or are they children"*:

I sense that they have something I'll never share. It is (...) the hell they have gone through, the extent of which I cannot yet even begin to imagine. It is also the awe of an unfamiliar intimacy, the intimacy of suffering, of grief, which is indivisible. What can I offer in return? My love? My trust? My humanity?

The team on site worked to rehabilitate the young men and prepare them emotionally as well as physically for a life more normal. They taught them skills they would need in their new lives. They provided comfort and love. But supplies of food and clothing were scarce and there was conflict with the Red Cross Swiss Aid head office who recommended a more "boy scouts" approach to activities. But solutions to the tragic aftermath of the war were changing quickly and subject to political machinations. After a few weeks, news came that the Felsenegg community would close in September. The boys would be transferred to the care of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities to be prepared in special homes, "Aliyah homes", for emigration to Palestine and new lives there.

However, the building would be used again for the rehabilitation of displaced children. In the summer of 1946, about 90 children who had lost parents during the war arrived, mainly from Slovakia. The journey was organised by the Red Cross but the rehabilitation centre seems mainly to have been staffed by Slovakians, probably from one of the Jewish organisations that arranged recuperation programmes for orphans in Eastern Europe, such as the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) perhaps working jointly with the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, active 1943-46).



As when it was the dining hall for the hotel and then the Institut Felsenegg, today's Aula was used to serve food for the Buchenwald-kinder.
Image source: ETH, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte: NL Charlotte Weber / 85



Singing together in the woods near Felsenegg.
Image source: ETH, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte: NL Charlotte Weber / 85

One of the children who found refuge on the Zugerberg was invited to Montana in 2016. Judita Schlesinger (née Rosenblüth) was found by history teacher Ana Verhar when she was exploring primary sources on the story of the refugees in archives in Zürich. Judita was 10 years old in 1946. Her family had to live in the ghetto in their hometown in Slovakia after German occupation. When they saw other Jews being dragged away and executed, her family fled. They hid in the countryside in bunkers, simple holes in the ground, protected as far as possible by local peasants. One day when the world was freezing under a blanket of thick snow, the soldiers found her father and shot him. Judita was footsteps away in the icy bunker.

She described the Zugerberg that summer as an idyllic oasis. All victims of terror, here the refugees could live as children under a warm sun, picking wild strawberries and visiting the lake.

The talk led to a reflection on the hatred that drives war and the values that can help human beings move on. As Mrs Schlesinger explained:

We shouldn't allow hate. We shouldn't be indifferent – not toward injustice, toward other people's suffering, or even toward ourselves. We shouldn't allow others to make even vaguely racist comments, we should call them on it, we shouldn't let them judge people for what they are without knowing who they really are. We need to be open, tolerant and loyal toward other people and try to help them when they are in need. If we don't do this, I am very afraid that history might repeat itself, that people will not learn from past mistakes.

A reflection that chimes with the mission that drove the creation of Montana.



A scrapbook page with photos taken in front of the Felsenegg building. Image source: ETH, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte: NL Charlotte Weber / 85







Classroom, kitchen, and medical facilities at Felsenegg. Image source: ETH, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte: NL Charlotte Weber / 85



A watercolour painting of a peaceful sunset on the Zugerberg. The written caption contains a famous rhyming verse from Goethe's poem "Selige Sehnsucht".
Image source: ETH, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte: NL Charlotte Weber / 85

PART THREE
THE OSTERMAYER YEARS
1946 *to* 1980

STARTING AGAIN



The war is over and a new chapter begins
We can not know for sure why or when Max Husmann made the choice not to continue as director of Institut Montana after the war. By the end of World War II he was 57 years old. Husmann had shown himself, at Montana and when he drove Operation Sunrise to its completion, to be an energetic, unflagging character full of determination, not someone to give up on a project in which he passionately believed because he had run out of steam. His role in Operation Sunrise was certainly strenuous, but its political repercussions would bring their own challenge. Switzerland was actively covering up Sunrise, and his role made him, like Max Waibel perhaps, unwelcome. Those press allegations must have made life for him complicated. He spent more and more time in Rome.

He wavered, he later wrote, between selling the school or of setting up a Foundation to preserve its mission. He chose the latter. He was not about to let go completely.

January 1946: the foundation Max Husmann
The search for a director to lead Montana onwards from the trials of war was on. But first, Max Husmann wanted to ensure the preservation of the core values on which he had built his school. These would be carved into the statutes



This painting was made as a triptych on three canvases. Its origin remains unknown. It was on a wall in Grosses Haus at the time of Montana's 70th birthday in 1996 with a lettered sign "Voralpines Knabeninstitut Montana Zugerberg" so it could have been created soon after the merger of Montana and Institut Felsenegg. For years after it was stored in a wooden box in the Trinkhalle until found by Richard Inderbitzen around 2019. Today, it hangs inside the south entrance to Grosses Haus.

of a Foundation and would act as guidelines to follow both while he was still alive and after his death.

The Max Husmann Foundation document was signed on 12th January, 1946. It was an auspicious date and surely not a coincidence that it marked the birth of Johann Pestalozzi 200 years previously on 12th January, 1746. The teaching of the Swiss educator with his child-centred values, his emphasis on holistic learning and his belief in the importance of warm and positive relations between teachers and their pupils would be forever linked with Montana's development.

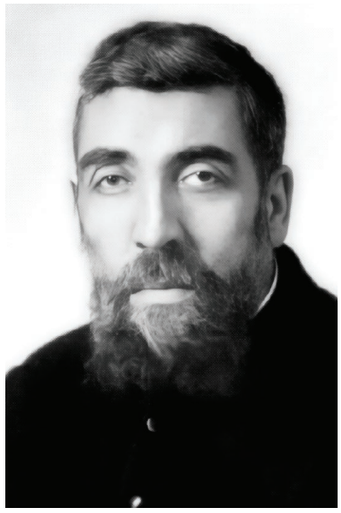
The other key characteristic was internationalism: *The international character of the school must be preserved, and care must be taken to ensure that an understanding of the dignity of the human personality and friendship are cultivated and promoted among the young people from different countries who grow up together.*

Husmann would continue as Chairman of the Board of Montana. Two other individuals collaborated in drawing up the statutes and remained actively engaged as trustees.

Husmann met Dr Alfred Teobaldi at a conference in Zürich in 1945. A leading theologian in the Swiss Catholic church, Teobaldi was an intellectual and a benefactor. As well as Montana, he was involved in educational work at Burghölzli Psychiatric Polyclinic, Regensdorf Prison, Zürich District Prison and the Lattenberg children's home, until his death in 1977.

Dr Emil Steimer was the Director of Education of the Canton of Zug. As cantonal notary, he drew up the public deed for the foundation and his support acted to legitimise the school within the wider locality. He would become further connected to Institut Montana when his daughter married a colourful teacher from the French speaking part of Switzerland who will join the staff in 1947 - Aloys Rosset.





Left: Dr Emil Steimer, Kanton Zug Regierungsrat (Canton of Zug Government Council) and vice president of the Max Husmann foundation after its creation in 1946. Image source: Bibliothek Zug, Porträtsammlung. Right: Dr Alfred Teobaldi.

The next director

Husmann, together with his trustees, sought a new Director to lead the school. While promoting one of the earlier collaborators - Keller or Sauerwein - might have been an option, they had left Montana in 1939 and 1942 respectively. The recruitment area seems to have been local - further afield would have been, perhaps, difficult in 1945.

Dr Josef Ostermayer was 37 years old. He was then working at the cantonal school in Lucerne, having taught previously at a school in Zug and at the Teacher College. His flair for languages made him a strong candidate for Montana. His studies had included language courses in Siena, Perugia and London, as well as primary school teacher training in Zug and the diploma for secondary school teaching from the University of Freiburg. He had excellent German, Italian, English and French - his doctoral thesis was on the relationships between French and German literature in the first half of the 19th century. He was also highly recommended by Emil Steimer.

When approached about the Montana directorship in May 1946, Ostermayer wavered at first, modestly anxious about being too young for so responsible a post. But he looked forward to being able to work more independently than in the cantonal schools. Consulting with his wife Elisabeth was fundamental to his decision to accept the role. The Ostermayers, married in 1938, were a strong team from the very beginning.



Right: Dr Josef Ostermayer and Elisabeth Ostermayer, circa 1940
Below: in 1955



The contract was signed on 9th July, 1946. That summer, Ostermayer familiarised himself with the set-up by taking over direction of the Summer School. He was fully installed as Director in September 1946, his family moved to the Zugerberg and made their home on campus in a small apartment in the "Elsener Haus" on the avenue to Felsenegg. Their three children would all be enrolled as Montana students - including their daughter Verena.

Josef Ostermayer would succeed brilliantly at rebuilding a school broken, but not destroyed, by war. He would ensure that it grew to a size that fitted its purpose, and then achieve the stability so necessary for longevity. His calm, quietly authoritative presence would touch the lives of students and staff for thirty-four years. In the mid 1970s, for Montana's 50th birthday, he wrote his history of the school. This 100th anniversary book is indebted to his work and the framework it provides for this period of Montana's story.

The other next director - and Paula Hug

While Josef Ostermayer is always, and rightfully, considered the real successor to Max Husmann, we picked up wisps of a story about an intervening director. While there is no information about how long he served in the post, he was there, albeit briefly, shortly before the approach to Ostermayer. A piece written in the second issue of the Montanablatt, published April 1947, confirmed the hints. More importantly, the piece drew attention to another character about whom we knew little, and yet was important to Montana's post-war recovery.

Written in French by the editor of the issue, Heinz Barth, the piece is a celebration of Frau Professor Paula Hug. We hear that she took the reins - *Durant l'époque difficile qui a suivi le départ de feu Monsieur le Directeur Auckenthaler* (*during the difficult period that followed the departure of the late Director Auckenthaler*). We do not know what happened to Auckenthaler, even if he did actually die in service as the French implies. It could have been a turn of phrase as suggested by another source that turned up in the archives (notes from an interview with Huldreich Sauerwein, date not preserved). Sauerwein spoke about the war years and suggested that Husmann was feeling in need of more support on the Zugerberg.



J. Ostermayer



Paula Hug's signature and the official Montana stamp, 1940



Paula Hug, Dean of Studies and Dr Josef Ostermayer, Director, 1952

In 1944, Husmann appointed a new director. It was around the time he was becoming involved in Operation Sunrise. In a later document, Sauerwein recalled how Husmann was soon obliged to dismiss this character for not living up to expectations. The unfortunate Herr Auckenthaler, we guess.

What we do know from this piece is that Paula Hug was a well-respected and much loved leader of the school. It talks about her empathy, her warmth and her bridge-building. She was able to create an ambiance that was *joyeuse et dégagée*, and yet she had absolute authority, you would do exactly as she asked not because of fear of punishment but because, if she said it, you knew it was the right thing to do. The words of praise harmonise with Husmann's vision of teaching:

Elle nous aime, nous la vénérons. Avec elle, nous n'avons jamais senti la difference d'age qui nous separe. Lorsque sa classe de brebis galleuses aura quitté Montana, elle vivra avec nous, parce que une fois qu'on l'a vue, on ne peut l'oublier.

She loves us and we worship her. With her, we have never felt the difference in years that separates us. When her class of black sheep will have left Montana, she will stay with us, because, once you have met her you can never forget her.

Paula Hug, then Huber, was born in Lucerne. She became a teacher and married another teacher, Johann Hug, who set up the Institut "Platanenhof" in Zug in 1903. In 1917, the couple, together with a group of other interested parties (including owner of the Grand Hotel Schönfels Adolf Kummer), organised the purchase of the Hotel Felsenegg to turn it into the "Schweizerisches Landerziehungsheim Zugerberg". Johann Hug was joint Head of the school with Wilhelm Pfister (founder of the Institut Dr Pfister in Oberägeri) until he died suddenly in 1919 leaving Paula Hug with four children and the business.

As we have seen, Frau Hug left Institut Felsenegg when new owners took over, only to return to the Zugerberg when Max Husmann acquired the school in 1937, creating a single school on the mountain. She joined the school's leadership and taught German and French. Supporting Max Husmann, it was Paula Hug who helped him lead the school during the war years and especially after whatever was the debacle with Herr Auckenthaler. When Josef Ostermayer became director he appointed the Frau Professor as director of Studies. He wrote how highly he valued her collaboration. Paula Hug died suddenly in the summer holidays of 1952. It was the 25th August while she was on vacation in Bern, although we read that she had suffered from heart problems and was prepared. She was 69 years old, although, as her obituary said, she had remained youthfully energetic even as the years passed.

Montana Rebuilds

It is hard to imagine what the school looked like in 1945. Parts had been abandoned and others treated brutally. The Schönfels building, now Grosses Haus, had been the home of a small core of teachers and students throughout the war years. The Dependance annexe, today's Juventus, was still inhabited by some refugee families invited by Husmann. The Chalet stood empty. The military had left their barracks in Felsenegg but the building would, as we saw, become a sanctuary for groups of refugee children displaced by the war.

The clear up task began quickly. Rebuilding first focused on Schönfels. In the winter of 1946, younger boys moved into bedrooms in the Juventus annexe and some of the older boys could move into the Chalet. In September 1945, a section of the Felsenegg building had collapsed. Subsequent repairs were postponed while Ostermayer pulled together documentation reports to show that the collapse was the result of negligence of the construction company then working on repairing the building. Felsenegg was officially returned to the school in 1948 and students could move in. However, the compensation claim rumbled on until 1951, when the Federal Court overturned the earlier judgement of the Cantonal Court of Zug and ordered the construction company to pay damages.



Aerial photo, 1952

STARTING AGAIN

When he began as director in September 1946, Josef Ostermayer was leading a school with eleven teachers. Of these, seven were already Montana staff and four were newly recruited. Two were Dutch, one Italian and the rest were Swiss.

There were 47 students of whom 14 were new. Student recruitment was not easy straight after the war, but children still had to go to school. This was before borders had opened or economies had stabilised enough for Germany and eastern Europe to send their children away to school, so the focus was on Swiss, Italian and Dutch students with Max Husmann pursuing old contacts in Rome. By the end of the school year 1947/1948 there were 129 students in total.

At the same time, funds were scarce. In December 1946, Ostermayer called Husmann to say there was not enough in the bank account to meet the salaries. Fortunately, Husmann had the personal resources to get the school through the immediate crisis. An especially significant increase in Italian students in 1948/49 aided financial recovery, teacher salaries could be increased and the renovation of Felsenegg completed.



The Ostermayers and other members of the school, 1947

The Logo

The new director set out to re-write the school's publicity materials (mainly printed brochures) in several languages. The new start would be reflected in fresh graphics and a memorable logo. Dr Alfred Teobaldi had the contact with Hans Tomamichel whose magic would create an emblem that would last.

Hans Tomamichel was a well-known graphic designer and painter. Born in Ticino in 1899, he moved to Zürich in 1914 to learn his craft as an apprentice. In 1923 he went to Paris to study painting at the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and it is said that he enjoyed Paris street life to the full. He returned to Zürich in 1927 and built up a portfolio of work for various clients, both big business and smaller local enterprises, and was a co-founder of the Swiss graphic arts association (Schweizer Grafiker Verband). In 1932 he invented the legendary logo of Nestlé's Fip-Fop children's club. In 1947 he was asked by Knorr to define their brand and his creation become a part of Swiss cultural heritage.

Knörrli was modelled, according to the artist himself, on a friendly mountain gnome from his village in the Maggia valley: "I gave him a round head – just like a soup plate." After 1953 he set to work on Aromat seasoning, a product that carved a lasting place for itself in homes and restaurants throughout Switzerland and in the memories of generations of students at Institut Montana. As well as Knorr, Tomamichel had other prestigious clients, including Caritas Zürich. Theobaldi's connection was a golden opportunity for Montana to present itself through a logo and with printed materials by so talented an artist.

Tomamichel's Montana logo is a powerful visual expression of the school's mission, summarising ideas about connections around the world and the concept of growth that is implicit in education. It is all the more memorable for its simplicity - although the very earliest versions had a touch of flamboyance with a flower in bloom.

The first version of Montana's new logo appeared in a trifold brochure that came out in 1947. As well as the logo, Tomamichel was responsible for three unique illustrations, the layout of the graphics and the typesetting. The photos were about a decade old by the time the brochure was created. The brochure was republished eight years later with a revised design, also by Tomamichel.



The first version of Montana's modern logo appeared in this 1947 trifold brochure by Swiss designer Hans Tomamichel. Image source: Elisabeth Flueler-Tomamichel and Graphische Sammlung und Fotoarchiv, Zentralbibliothek Zürich

Repopulating the Zugerberg

In post-war Europe, freedom to travel returned slowly. Alongside the Swiss, the Dutch Section was able to reopen in 1946 and increased from seven to fifty students over the next three years. That number would then drop, probably due to outside events (currency exchange rates and the opening of a Dutch school in Montreux), and stabilise at around twenty.

The Italian section officially reopened in 1947 with two teachers and ten students. It grew rapidly to 121 students in 1953, over half of the Montana total population. As Ostermayer wrote, that was too many for the balance of the school, but other Swiss schools were starting to offer Italian courses and Montana's number dropped to around 100.

After the currency reform of 1948, German families could send their sons to Switzerland. By 1951/52, there were ten of them and numbers increased steadily with partial recognition from the German authorities for the Swiss Matura allowing entrance to universities in Germany.

As travel resumed, students came from across continents, from Kabul, from Zagreb, from South America, the last of which would grow from a tiny minority to a consistent group in its own right.

Reaching across the ocean - the American Section

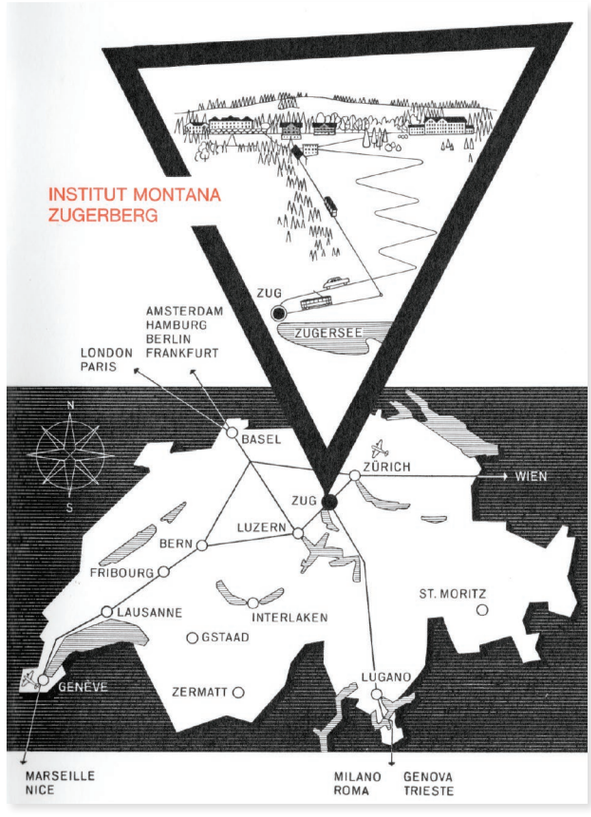
The world was different now, becoming more connected and more ready for international education than at the end of World War I. Businesses, industries (especially the oil industry), politics, and banking, many with bases in America, all were going global and sending their employees, and their families, across the world. These families sought a new form of education for their children, one more compatible with their cosmopolitan lifestyle. An American college in Europe, the old continent with its mix of cultures as well as its flight connections, was an exciting proposition. And Switzerland, with its landscape that glowed with beauty and health, was an appealing destination. While a number of Americans had briefly attended Montana before the war, the opportunity to grow this sector became an imperative.

Montana was not the only establishment that saw this potential but Ostermayer, initially working with Fred Ott, a Swiss-American, acted effectively. He began negotiations for testing rights for the College Entrance Examination for higher education in the United States in 1951 and set up an American Section in 1952.

It had twenty students, many of them sons of fathers working in the oil industry in Saudi Arabia, and one teacher.



Advertisement and graphic design, 1950



The vision for Montana's American Section was encapsulated in a specially prepared brochure, one for the Junior College dated 1951 and one for an Elementary and High School in 1952. When they list the school's educational objectives, the voice of the 1940s, even from earlier, runs in parallel with some more progressive ideas. Assumptions about the about the qualities of manliness, the values of the Christian world, and that study should be hard and purposeful, have a traditionalist ring to them. And yet, the style of education described is fresher, still innovative. It highlights the international renown of a language learning system where classroom instruction is integrated by living with students whose mother tongue is the language you are learning. The school's first educational objective was *responsible membership in a community of youth from many nations of the world.*



Promotional photograph taken in the walkway between Grosses Haus and Juventus, 1950.

Montana is 25 years old

It is May 1951! Montana celebrates its 25th anniversary.

A ceremony on the Zugerberg on 27th May was attended by some twenty members of staff joined by around fifty students from the pre-war period. They included Erone Lavazza and Hans Wyder, two of the first students who came to Montana in May 1926. A chance to witness the school's recovery after the dark years of the war made it an auspicious occasion. The weather was dreadful but accounts of the festivities are full of joy.

Salomon David Steinberg made an emotional speech that went back to the day, twenty-six years ago, when his friend, Max Husmann, had first dragged him up the Zugerberg. They had run together through the empty building of an old hotel, down to the cellars and around the little farm. They ended up in the dusty hall of Schönfels where there were two tatty billiard tables. It looked sad. But Husmann was full of optimism. He called his friend to look outwards. You must, he said, see this in the morning sun or the heat of the evening, and know how good it feels to look down on the lake and marvel at the distant mountains.

That day all was obscured by a blanket of cloud. But Steinberg had imagination. He could feel the sunshine coming off Husmann's strength. Here I shall establish a school, Husmann said, a school where all peoples meet, a school of work, a house of friendship. In spite of the challenges, Steinberg explained twenty-six years later, that school was still there, thanks to the vision, understanding and determination of its founder.

Steinberg also thanked Husmann's wife, whom he described as *deine treue Kameradin in der Schlacht um den Zugerberg. (Your loyal comrade in the battle for Zugerberg).*

Even as it emerged from the rubble, the new dawn for Montana was an exciting place. The world had opened up again after the war and the future was bright. For families attached to an increasingly cosmopolitan lifestyle, an international school aligned ideologically as well as practically with their needs. In a beautiful healthy Swiss landscape and yet close to international airports, Institut Montana could be that school. It had strong educational principles to guide its rebuilding and a leader who was dedicated to the cause and determined, in his quiet way, to make the school a success.









The 25th anniversary celebrations in the Aula, 1951







As part of the 25th anniversary festivities in May of 1951, students performed the play “Athalie” by Jean Racine. It is a tragic tale of a ferocious feud, false gods and child murder, ending when the infidel Athalie is killed by the sword and a rescued baby, now a young boy Joash (above), is anointed king.

THE 1950s
LA MONTAGNE DE LA JEUNESSE

La belle nature, la campagne, la montagne: voilà l'idéal pour l'étudiant.
The beauty of nature, the countryside, the mountain: this is the ideal for the student.



The eastward-facing view of the Montana campus, circa 1950, with the Ägerisee and the Glarner Alpen forming the backdrop



It is the 1950s

In 1951, an anniversary booklet celebrated the values that had seen Montana through the challenges and the glories of its first 25 years. It described the Zugerberg, the beauty of its meadows and the peace of its pine-woods, as La Montagne de la Jeunesse.

Soon after, in spring 1952, a reporter from the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* paid a visit and wrote an in-depth article about the school up there on the Zugerberg. The report described how students of twenty nationalities were taught in five national sections underscored by an "institutional concept" - to promote international understanding through youth education. The report was impressed by high quality teaching from friendly, lucid teachers explaining advanced history, mathematics, and literature to receptive students. A flexible learning system was in place, where pupils were assigned to classes depending on their speed of learning.

Josef Ostermayer had spent the past five years re-establishing the school - its campus and accommodation, number of students and teachers, and shaping its educational approach. He and his wife Elisabeth were a strong team. The pair would discuss every decision he faced and share their views to find the best way forward. Elisabeth Ostermayer, a trained physical therapist, also took a professional role at the school caring for the students. Their three children were the first (and only for some time) day students, in that they slept at home even though home was on the campus. Their daughter, Verena, was among the first female students (possibly the 5th including those who only attended the Summer School but records are not entirely reliable) enrolled at Montana. Unlike her predecessors, who had stayed but a few weeks or maybe months at the school, Verena was a Montana student for most of her school life until she was almost 18 years old.

After the devastation of World War II and the assault on the values on which it had been founded, Montana would grow and flourish and pay off a large debt accumulated during the war years. The Korean War of 1950 - 1953 was a setback for the recruitment drive, but, by February 1953, the pre-war record of 217 had been overtaken with 220 students. Ostermayer was happy that the numbers enabled a salary increase for all staff, teaching and administrative.



INSTITUT MONTANA ZUGERBERG

1000 m über Meer

Leitung:
Dr. J. Ostermayer-
Bettschart

Internationale Schule für Knaben
vom 7. bis 18. Lebensjahr

Schweizer Sektion
mit allen Schulstufen:
Primar- und Sekundarschule, Gymnasium
Oberrealschule, Handelsabteilung

Ferienkurse Juli–September

Swiss designer Hans Tomamichel's illustration of students with the vista of Pilatus and the Lake of Zug from 1947 was repurposed for this advertisement in 1952.

Berg **DER JUGEND**

Eine knappe Bahn- oder Autostunde von Zürich entfernt, auf einem der landschaftlich reizvollsten Aussichtspunkte der Zentralschweiz, umgeben von ausgedehnten Wäldern und Matten, liegt das

VORALPINE KNABENINSTITUT MONTANA
ZUGERBERG (1000 m ü. M.)

Mit seinen modernen Arbeitsstätten und Sportplätzen, seinen gesunden und erprobten Erziehungsgrundsätzen, bietet es der heranwachsenden Jugend einen einzigartigen Aufbau von staatlich anerkannten Sektionen, eine Synthese nationalen Unterrichts und internationalen Zusammenlebens ● Montana führt eine Elementarschule, an welche die schweizerische, englische, holländische und italienische Sektion anschließen. Die Maturitätsprüfungen für sämtliche Abteilungen finden in der Schule in Anwesenheit der entsprechenden staatlichen Experten statt. Daneben besteht eine in deutscher und französischer Sprache geführte Handelsabteilung, die mit einem staatlichen Diplom oder der Handelsmatura abschließt ● Diese besondere Lösung eines wichtigen Erziehungsproblems erweckt das lebhafte Interesse im In- und Auslande, und ein Besuch auf Zugerberg wird auch Ihnen persönliche und bleibende Eindrücke vermitteln ● Das Institut beherbergt heute 190 Zöglinge und über 100 Lehrer und Angestellte.

Berg der Jugend, an evocative catchphrase that the school first used in 1937 to describe itself.

Herr Director Ostermayer was known for his calm approach and, even as the school grew, for knowing every pupil by name. Anyone who was applying for an Ausgang (a slip of paper signed by the Director granting permission to leave campus) had to visit him personally and receive his signature. As we shall see, this simple mechanism allowed him to maintain control over his flock during a time of rapid cultural change.





Individual music lessons with teacher Rudolf Benedikter, 1950.

The campus - time to modernise

Once essential post-war repairs were completed, the school could move onto a gradual and systematic modernisation of the campus.

An automatic telephone exchange was connected in 1952 and all the electrics received a complete overhaul. In 1956, the top floor of the old Hotel Schönfels building (that was coming to be known as Grosses Haus) was rebuilt and expanded, adding a new attic to create more accommodation under the new roof. There was now space for 230 students. The old hotel lift was removed and the staircase widened. Modern kitchen equipment was installed - a large dishwashing machine, up-to-date cookers and an ice-cream maker.

In 1959, works on the north sports field were completed, including levelling out the old swimming pool. Although brochures from the early 1950s talk about plans to enlarge the pool, its structure was never completely sound and Ostermayer was sceptical about the benefits of an outdoor pool at 1,000m that could be used on only a few golden summer days. It was abandoned.

Education for International Understanding in Practice

Ostermayer was overall head of a school that was developing as a sum of several parts, continuing the model that had started to emerge in the 1930s. He entirely shared the belief in the merits of national education in an international environment that Huldreich Sauerwein had set out in 1938, where students would be educated according to national programmes while sharing life as a multicultural community. In a paper he wrote in 1950 titled “Education for International Understanding in Practice”, he concluded:







Grosses Haus in 1950, 1955 and 1964

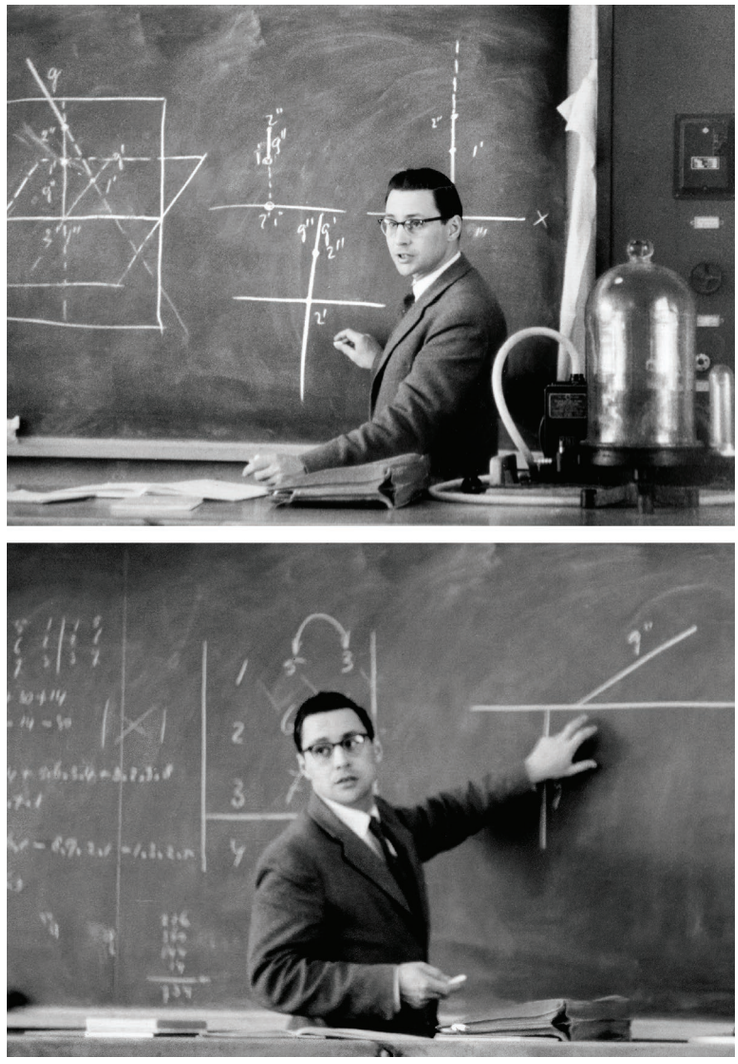
Therefore, at Montana, education in the direction of international understanding is a didactic problem only in a small degree: it is above all a task for the community.

The next step would be properly to establish the learning programme for each section.

Post World War II, the freedom to create bespoke learning programmes that had been available to Max Husmann was disappearing. The national education programmes developed by different countries around Europe were seeing ever larger cohorts of students through the syllabus. This demanded increasingly systematised promotion policies and assessment criteria. In this environment, the practice of flexible classes, so intrinsic to Husmann's original model, could not last and, during the 1950s, it was phased out.

As the school reestablished, Ostermayer was deeply involved in developing the teaching plan for the Swiss Section. He began intensive work on the Matura in 1954 which was trialled and then published in 1957. A curriculum for the Commercial Diploma (Handelsdiplom) was finalised in 1961. Both were approved by the Canton of Zug. Negotiations with German and Dutch educational authorities secured recognition of their Swiss diplomas for students' entrance to university in their home countries.

The German economy, broken by war, was starting to recover and its currency becoming usable again. Montana became a popular option among families who were part of that recovery. The section was alternately called the Swiss or German Section, and was for a long time the grouping of boys who were German citizens along with a smaller number of their Swiss peers, the defining factor being teaching in German. By 1955 there were 62 German students, significantly outnumbering Swiss. Ostermayer, looking back as he wrote on the school's history, mused on the reasons for the lower take up of places by Swiss families. The lack of federal recognition for its Matura put many of them off, along with, he suggested, international fees that were too high in the eyes of Swiss families and an *"excessive number of foreigners"* at the school. He would begin a drawn out campaign to obtain federal recognition for the Matura at Montana, eventually achieved in 1976. It became an important factor in discussions about admission to German and Dutch universities as well as to bring the prestige that would attract more Swiss nationals.



Maths lesson using descriptive geometry to explain three dimensional objects and how a three dimensional line is mapped onto a two dimensional plane, 1958. Teacher Karl Hanke's humour would brighten up the subject for many future Montana students.



Studying botany with Dr Stocker, 1950. At the blackboard is Kraft Fürst zu Hohenlohe-Oehringen.

The group of Dutch students would study Dutch history and literature with their own teachers and celebrate Dutch cultural traditions together, while continuing senior studies towards the Swiss Matura in German or the High School Diploma in English. The French, while studying with the Swiss Section, had their own grouping where French literature and culture were promoted especially enthusiastically by teacher Aloys Rosset who had joined the school soon after the war in 1947. Although numbers of French students were always low, the language and culture of France remained at the school's core for many years. Husmann often used it in his writings (several pieces in the 25 year Anniversary brochure, by Husmann and others, use French, alongside articles in Italian and Dutch as well as German and English). Ostermayer, of course, had specialised in French studies and was fluent.

The Italian Section was always a bit different. As its President and staff were overseen by the Italian authorities rather than the Director of Montana, the section had a tendency towards autonomy. This riled Ostermayer who dismissed several Presidents (they were onto the 3rd by 1951) and whose narrative tells of frequent feuds with the Italian authorities. However, the appointment in 1952 of Professor Remigio Pian changed things. Pian understood and appreciated what the school wanted to achieve. He promoted the advantages of this Italian school outside of Italy, describing (in the Montanablatt of April 1952) how the boys lived in "spiritual communion" with young people of other nationalities, they learnt tolerance and understanding. They had rich opportunities to learn other languages and to live a healthy lifestyle with lots of sports. Another Italian teacher, Giovanni Corrado, joined the school in 1952 and became a valued colleague of Josef Ostermayer. Corrado led the section from 1958 and, although replaced in this role by the Italian authorities in 1964, he would remain at Montana, becoming an important Hausleiter, until 1976.

Italian Section, class of 1954





Winter 1952-53, (from left to right): Ruggero Piaggio, Peter Hotz, Renald van Raalte, Hans Carl Schmidt-Polex, Furrokh Bilimoria, Ivan Elkan, teacher Paul Legras, Armand Geiben, Fredi Mettler, Jacques Think, Freddy Enneking. Photo taken by classmate Pieter Kunheim.

The new American Section grew slowly over the first years but it would develop into a lively cohesive, community. Most were American citizens, some of whom were sons of oil company employees in the Middle East and others from families based in Europe. They would return in the vacation to homes across the world from Arabia to Zürich. There were individual cases of boys of other nationalities as shown in the list of the first four Montana students who took the American College Entrance Examination in 1954:

Paulsen Bailey, American citizen, resident in Paris
Bilimoria Furrokh, from India, resident in Hyderabad
Jose Gonzalez from the Philippines, resident in New Manila
Ted Rees, American citizen, resident in Oslo

The first Head of Section (later called Dean) in 1953 was Dr John Parr, who had been a lecturer in American Literature and History at the University of Fribourg. When he left in 1955, the post was taken by Emory Trosper for a year, then Willian Chandlee for two, until the return of Trosper, popularly known as ET, in 1958. The syllabus was still more loosely structured than it would become over time, and the enthusiasms of the teachers could shape what was learnt. William Chandlee's passion for Shakespeare meant that his class became experts within a year:

It was probably heavy going for my students, but they were patient with me.
William Chandlee quoted by Dean Peter Oehrlein

This era saw the beginning of a Montana adventure that would become a regular feature of the school calendar. The Travel Workshops, first described in American Section brochures from 1951, were organised to provide a learning associated excursion in the Easter holiday. They began Europe focused but the opening up of travel in the next decade (and the next chapter of this book) would open up the world.

By 1960, the American Section had around 36 students and, as the later Dean Peter Oehrlein explained in the Montanablatt of Christmas 1977, had developed a reputation for academic excellence among families and the American colleges towards which its students aspired.

Life at school

The pre-war House system seems not to have been reinvigorated after 1946. Now, and as the school grew bigger, the actual houses where students lived according to their age became the organising factor. Juventus for boys aged seven to twelve, Mittelhaus (or Felsenegg) for those from thirteen to sixteen, Grosses Haus (Schönfels) for the seventeen and eighteen year olds, and Chalet for the oldest boys whose immaculate behaviour and consistently high grades made them worthy of the privilege.

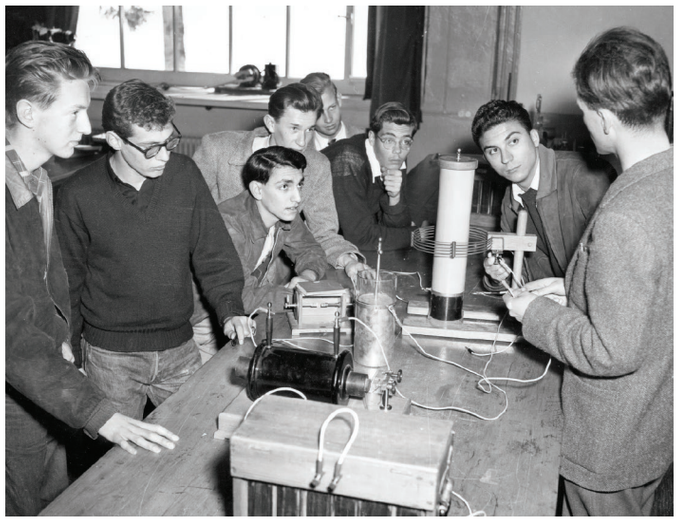
Each of the houses had a house father (Hausleiter), who was a teacher or ex-teacher and a house mother. At this stage, nearly all of the teachers lived on campus creating a family atmosphere valued by Ostermayer. Gradually, however, more and more of the Swiss teachers had their homes and families in Zug. It was teachers in the American and Italian Sections, often young adults seeking new experiences before settling back in their home country, who lived on campus with boarding house duties.

The reporter from the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* who visited in 1952 commented on bedrooms for one, two or three students, where you could identify tastes according to nationality and age. It was a thing of joy, the article enthused, that, alongside pictures of home and family were colourful posters showing landscapes and natural surroundings. Watch out for drastic changes to such posters in coming decades!

The relaxed environment that would teach self-responsibility, observed by the visiting English teacher Rupert Crooke-Croft in the 1930s, still pervaded, as recounted in the memoirs of Anthony Scott. He and his brother, Michael, spent a year at Montana in 1950 to 1951. Having been moved from their final year of schooling at a school run by the Benedictine monks in County Limerick, Ireland, the Irish brothers enjoyed the experience of meeting boys from all sorts of different cultures and races as well as the contrast with their previous experiences:

The atmosphere in the school was easy-going, there was no flogging or harsh discipline and I enjoyed my time there very much. I was popular and energetic, playing tennis with some success - to myself, my many friends and my family I was completely normal.

Scott's memoir is especially poignant as it comes from his autobiography where he tells of his struggle with schizophrenia, diagnosed when he was 20 years old.



Physics with teacher Werner Durrer, (from left to right):
Willem Daniels, James Harithas, Furrokh Bilimoria, Armand Geiben, Gerard Plaisier, Dexter Worden, Eduard Teixeira de Mattos



American Section students with teacher William Chandlee (far left) and Dean Emory Trosper (far right), 1956





Woodworking in the Trinkhalle, 1950



Sport class outdoors between the Chapel and Juventus. Identifiable students (from left to right) Verena Ostermayer, Georgy Müller, Jan Humb den Bandt, Dirk Keppel, Paolo Nazzari, Istvan von Kvassay, Ivan Grünblatt, and on the bar, Jose Haessler.

Some very young boarders

One hundred years later and into the 21st century, the intention to send your son or daughter to boarding school aged six years old seems questionable at the least. Things were different in Europe of the 1920s, and still in the 1950s.

From 1950, the youngest children were divided off into a primary school that took boys aged six to twelve from all over the world. In charge of the school was Willy Steiger, whose words indicate that he was of a thoughtful, warm and caring character, mercifully for these very young children:

Damit der Erfolg nicht ausbleibt, muß der Erzieher vor allem das Vertrauen seiner Zöglinge erlangen. Vertrauen gegen Vertrauen, dies ist nur in Freundschaft und Kameradschaft möglich. Fern seiner Heimat und seinen Eltern bedeutet dem Knahen in diesem Alter der Lehrer viel mehr als nur Unterrichtserteilender. Wenn dieser einmal das junge Herz gewonnen hat, so wird sich der Erfolg erstaunlich schnell einstellen.

To ensure success, the educator must, above all, gain the trust of his pupil. Trust in return for trust. This is only possible through friendship and camaraderie. Far from his home and his parents, the teacher represents much more to the boy of this age than just a teacher. Once he has won the young heart, success will come surprisingly quickly.

Classes had a maximum of four pupils, the language of instruction was German but it was not the first language for many of the boys. Learning through play, as favoured by Herr Steiger, was a very modern approach then but he believed it to be the most successful way:

So erweitert sich der Wortschatz von Tag zu Tag, und es dauert nur kurze Zeit, bis es dem Unterricht Voll und ganz in der deutschen Sprache folgen kann. Es ist erstaunlich, wie leicht Kinder in diesem Alter Sprachen erlernen. Wir kennen mehrere Knaben im Alter von 8-10 Jahren, die fließend vier Sprachen sprechen.

Thus, the vocabulary expands from day to day, and it only takes a short time until the child can follow the lesson entirely in German. It is astonishing how easily children of this age learn languages. We know several boys between the ages of 8 and 10 who speak four languages fluently.

Steiger described how, from spring until autumn, they take their school out into the forest as much as possible. They have built a playhouse under the open sky. The children, he said, draw strength from nature.

By 1960, the needs of young children were seen differently and the wisdom of boarding so young was questioned. As we shall see, Montana would set its minimum age for admission at 10 years old.

Sports

After the war, huge effort and finance was put into bringing sports facilities up to a high standard. By April 1959, Ostermayer was able to write in school publicity:

Our sports facilities are exemplary today; they are certainly unsurpassed by any other institute.

The name Charles Dier is indelibly linked to Montana sports although he also taught art and there were plenty of others also teaching sport. He first joined Montana in 1941, left in 1944 to serve in the Swiss military but would return in 1948 as a Housefather as well as a sports teacher. His wife Alice became secretary to the Director.

Sports was more than games, although the enthusiasm among most of the Montaners for competitive sports was already something of legend. Physical education was compulsory for all students at Swiss state schools (unless officially excused) from the 1920s. At Montana, that meant at least three hours a week that included both individual sports (light athletics, gymnastics, callisthenics) and group activities. There was also a course on personal health where the boys learned about group behaviour, nutrition, physiological processes, mental health and first aid.

The year began with the Orientierungslauf, a tradition that, like Herr Dier, would remain part of the school for many years. In mixed age and mixed nationality teams, the boys explored the stunning landscape around the school, honed their map-reading and teamwork skills and learning about each other in the process.

Later we shall see Zugerberg snow becoming increasingly unreliable but, in the 1950s, it was assured. Even skiing down to Zug. The nights drawing longer saw the laying of bets about the arrival of the first snowfall. When? How much? When can we get the skis out again? The enterprising Herr Dier set up the first Kiosk, located on the first floor of Grosses Haus, for the hire or purchase of the relevant equipment so that everyone could participate in ski training, then compulsory. The Kiosk would move around the school with future locations at the south end of Juventus and also on the lower floor of the Chalet.

There were excursions to ski in more challenging environments than the gentle slopes of the Zugerberg. A young John Kerry, aged 11 and future American presidential candidate, wrote about the trip to ski Rigi in March 1955:



Beginning in 1936, the “alte Scheune” (old barn) was transformed into the Turnhalle. The wooden parts of the barn were removed. Then the remaining stone and mortar foundation was expanded before the walls and roof of the new building were constructed.



The interior of the Turnhalle, 1950



Sports teacher Charles Dier, 1958

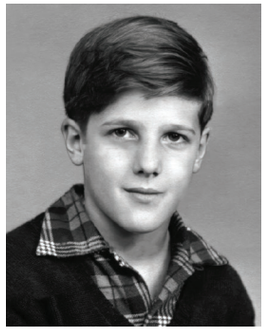
Bang! Crash! "Auf! Waschraum!" It was Tuesday, the big day when the boys who had been chosen for best behaviour in "Juventus" were going to Rigi for the day.
....
At the bottom of Rigi we had fog, but Mr. Costley assured us that there was sun at the top of the mountain. We boarded a small cog-wheel tram to the summit, but there was no chance to look back because of the car behind us. The minute I was off the tram I looked behind and saw the most beautiful view I had ever seen. Rows of mountain chains glittering in the sunlight, with crevices leaping up at one, silvery snow on top, some good for skiing and some not; some just standing there high and beautiful and others waiting for the day when they also would be looked up to as a skiing mountain and not just an old, worthless hill.
After a good look at the view, we skied to the ski lift.
The first sight of the piste made my heart leap from my breast to my mouth for it was so steep I felt I did not even want to try it.

He went on to have a brilliant day.

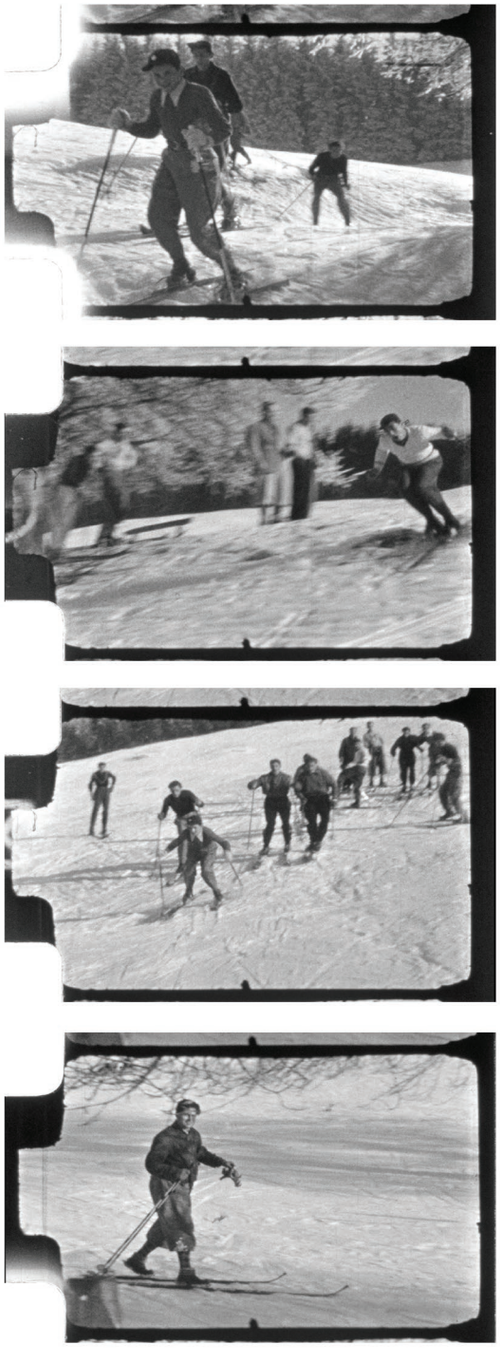
In December 1951, Charles Dier set up the Institut Montana Ski Club. Very quickly, 59 students had signed up and he put out the word, via the Montanablatt, to former students to join too. Membership had a host of advantages, as the club was connected to the Swiss Ski Federation. This brought benefits on rail connections to ski resorts, on ski lifts and participation in ski courses. All for the sum of seven francs a year.

Winter 1954 saw the first Winter Olympiade to mirror the annual summer light athletics event with the Olympic values in focus - building character, nations meeting, fairplay, and the stipulation that competition should be fun rather than taken over-seriously. Serious though, was Charles Dier's "Renngruppe", the ski team racers, mainly Swiss boys who had been born with skis on, as the saying goes. In 1960, the American Section was thrilled, as related in their Yearbook, that one of their members had made it onto the team. Dannee Fullerton had been aiming for that accolade since arriving at the school five years ago.

The first Montana team playing inter-school baseball met Institut auf dem Rosenberg in 1954. Charles Dier reported that he was not sure of how the sport will develop at Montana given the performance of the team! Basketball, however, was much stronger, along with light athletics and skiing. Overall, Dier wrote, Montana students could be pleased with their school's results.



John Kerry, 1954



A series of 8 mm film images showing skiing fun for novices and experts on the Zugerberg, 1950.

What did the boys do while not in lessons or playing sport?

In the 1950s, life was more focused on school activities than it would be for subsequent generations and personal freedoms more limited. Ausgangs (permission to leave the school campus) were available for Saturday afternoons but came with restrictions especially for anyone under sixteen. There were organised opportunities to experience the cultural riches of Zug and Zürich and excursions to concerts (including jazz for older boys), theatre and film were regular. Many such visits seem often to have been determinedly intellectual such as the trip to hear philosopher Martin Heidegger speak at the ETH in February 1954.

Back on the Zugerberg, outside speakers were invited, often with a religious focus for the different denominations at the school. There were also regular entertainment events with poetry, puppet theatres and magic shows.

We shall see music developing over the years and school bands are part of that wave of change. Already in the 1950s, boys were getting together to perform what would then have been termed as "light" music for their colleagues. One of the first such groups called themselves the Montana International Quartet. They became celebrated for concerts enhanced by skilful staging and lighting. It was an international line-up with Danee Fullerton on drums, Piet de Boer on double bass, and Cito Legarda on guitar. Bob Hill sang and played bongo and Ismael Dilber acted as Master of Ceremonies. By 1960, we see Dannee Fullerton still on drums with another set of musicians.

On campus, there were the school clubs. They were described by Ostermayer as educationally valuable activities that would not violate the young person's will to be "free" at free time. Each club had a student President and a teacher who acted as an advisor. Options began with a debating club and a chess club and quickly grew to include a library club, theatre, classical music, jazz, stamp-collecting and film. There are long lists of these activities in school brochures and at the back of the Montanablatt but these publications, prepared for showing the best side of the school, do not seem to have told the whole story. As we go through the years we learn not to assume that all the activities were operating as claimed by the publicity and we see repeated initiatives to "revitalise" the programme.

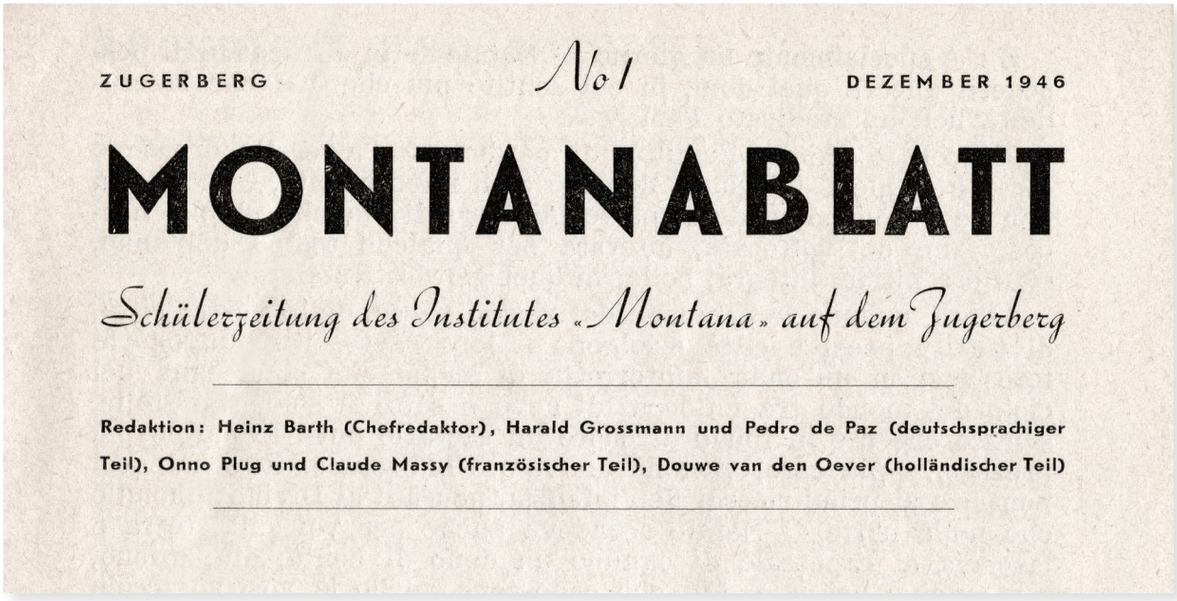
However, there were two non-academic projects that took root in the school in the 1950s and were emblematic of the Montana vision.







Top: A set of rock 'n' roll, swing and South American songs performed by (from left to right) Bob Hill, Dannee Fullerton and Cito Legarda on guitar, 1955. Middle: Dannee Fullerton playing drums with the traditional grip, 1952. Bottom: A concert to mark the spring of 1958 by the Montana International Quartet, a combo group featuring trumpet, piano, bass and drums.



ZUGERBERG — No 1 — DEZEMBER 1946

MONTANABLATT

Schülerzeitung des Institutes «Montana» auf dem Zugerberg

Redaktion: Heinz Barth (Chefredaktor), Harald Grossmann und Pedro de Paz (deutschsprachiger Teil), Onno Plug und Claude Massy (französischer Teil), Douwe van den Oever (holländischer Teil)

The masthead of the debut issue of the Montanablatt, 1946

The Montanablatt

When Montanablatt number one was published in December 1946, it was considered by the students a continuation of earlier Montana student magazines. They announced: *Le Montanablatt Renaît!* It was a project supported by the new Director. The chief editor, student Heinz Barth, had worked on a previous version of the school magazine. He guided the new editorial committee where there were two German speaking students, two French speakers and a Dutch speaker. In his editorial, Heinz wanted to ensure that it was not a section specific project:

Ich möchte Euch meinen Mitschülern noch einmal nahelegen, dass das Montanablatt auf allen gehört und somit allen offen steht.

I would like to emphasize to you, my classmates, that the "Montanablatt" belongs to all of you and is therefore open to everyone.

Edition number two, April 1947, had a greeting piece from new director Josef Ostermayer in which he addressed the "Alt-Montaner" pointing out the importance of the Montanablatt for staying on contact with the school:

Denkt an die Jungen und unterstützt die Schülerzeitung durch Beiträge! Ihr stärkt damit in allen den Willen und die Freude, treue Montaner zu sein.

Think of the young people and support the school newspaper with contributions! You will strengthen in everyone the will and joy of being loyal Montaners.





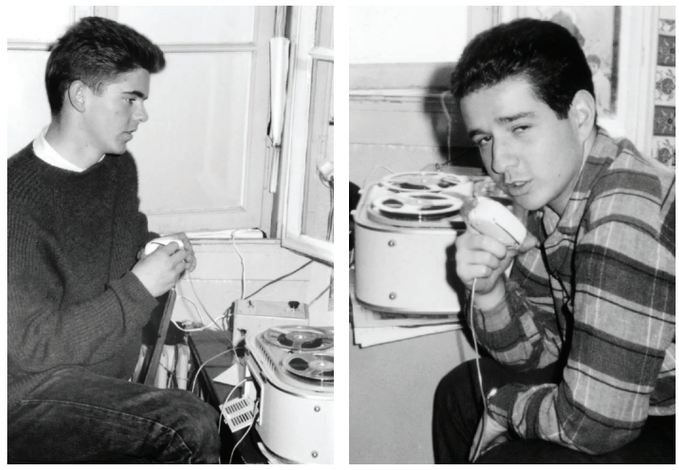
Top: A fast-paced game of table football, 1950. Below: Billiards, 1950

The Montanablatt would continue, with three editions each year, with students, and often staff too, devoting huge effort into producing articles. A bit of a hybrid, it combined news and articles from the intellectual to the frivolous. Arts criticism was a strong theme, with pieces on theatre, film and concerts the students had experienced in Zug and Zürich. For the first years, a regular piece - "Kritik auf der Zigarettenschachtel" (critique on the back of a cigarette packet) was the vehicle for short, informal and yet still insightful, snippets of arts criticism. We surmise that the assumption that someone, even a school student, would have a cigarette packet in their pocket was normal. The early Montanablatts were all text but technology moved on and pictures start to appear from the 1950s. Hugo Bruggisser (German and history teacher, Swiss Section) would oversee 38 editions from 1953 to 1965 during which time more visuals, cartoons as well as photographs, appeared on its pages.

The International Relations Club
In order to promote world peace it is essential that the various nations of the world work together and understand each other. This is the goal of democracy and of all freedom and peace loving peoples. This is the object of the International Relations Club.
Michael Caffee, Montanablatt April 1957.

The club was set up in 1951, spearheaded by Swiss section teacher of physics, Paul Legras. It would meet on Wednesday evenings with presentations organised by its members followed by discussions. The school year 1951/52 began with a presentation by a Chinese student about the island of Java and was followed by a teacher organised discussion on Atomic Energy and then another on comparisons between classical and modern music. The NZZ reporter who visited the school in 1952 was impressed to witness a fifteen year old native Swiss German speaker at one of their club nights engaging in an intellectual debate in fluent French.

The club remained small but determined. Paul Legras was a passionate advocate for its cause and the mission to overcome the nationalistic thinking that, he observed, was still visible at the school in spite of its intentions. By 1954, however, Legras was celebrating positive steps forward, for which he thanked the Presidents, Ted Rees of the American Section and Nicostrate Castellini of the Italian Section. He was leaving Montana, but he wished them all the best in sustaining the project.



Having been long accustomed to phonograph records and broadcast radio, these students were interested to experiment with recording their voices using reel-to-reel tape machines in their boarding rooms. They also assembled electronics kits in order to receive amateur radio signals from abroad, 1958.



Students and staff enjoy a trip together at the end of the school year, riding in a Swiss-made Saurer Alpenwagen with a transparent top, 1952.



Swimming in the Zugersee, 1950

In 1957 the International Relations club was continuing from strength to strength, with a broad range of topics to generate interest and an average of thirty members attending every meeting. A staff of volunteer translators worked at the meetings so that everyone could be involved. The year saw, among others, conferences on South America, the Suez Canal Crisis and the Arab League. It was student run by:

President John Wingham, a Canadian national who had lived in France, Dutch Section.
Vice-president Michael Caffee, a Californian living in Morocco, American Section.
Secretary Francisco Dávila from Colombia, American section.

There were separate Debating Clubs that were more section-oriented. In 1955 the American section set up their own club along the lines of those in American schools. In 1958, the Italian section set up the Club Politico-culturale.

Like many aspects of school life, it is often easy to identify a beginning but not an end. When something gradually fades out, which is generally how it happens, its end is not announced in quite the same way as its start. Clubs for International Relations and for the sparring of the debating chamber were of their time. Things change, but gradually.

Unsere Aufgabe ist es, Generationen von Jugendlichen aus den verschiedensten Nationen heranzubilden, welche dann in ihrem Lande die Idee der internationalen Verständigung weiter um sich verbreiten und so zur Völkerverbundenheit ihren Beitrag leisten.

Dr Paul Legras 1952

Our task is to raise generations of young people from the most diverse nations, who will then spread the idea of international understanding in their own countries and thus contribute to the unification of nations.



Badminton on the sports field, 1950



Reading a newspaper in the Chalet, 1950



Dr Ostermayer and Mrs Ferlinghetti visiting the kitchen, 1957

The Montana Kitchen - 1955

Research carried out by students H. Gijrath and N. Kiesselbach and published in the Montanablatt April 1955.

When we once paid a short visit to the kitchen, we saw huge cooking pots and large stores of food. Then the question arose: how much of all this good stuff do we actually eat at our school? With the kind help of Miss Salzmann, we came to the following conclusions: We consume 2700 balls of butter per day, which, if laid end to end, would stretch 14.04 km in a school year. We serve 65 scoops of jam a day, which means about 5.5 tons of jam per year. We eat 27 tons of bread per year; it would take nine 3-ton trucks to transport it. And then there's the other side of Montana! We consume 2340 kg of sugar per year, or 270,400 sugar lumps. This could cover an area of 54.08 square meters.

The Montana "nursery" consumes 39,000 liters of milk per year. Montana eats about 1,250,000 spoonfuls of soup per school year. To fill the stomach, potatoes are needed, so we eat 46.8 tons of potatoes per year, and we also drink approximately 350,000 glasses of fine spring water!

If one were to look at Montana from an edible perspective, one could conclude from the results that it is a small town. Well then, bon appétit!

The Borbon Affair

In the summer of 1953, Montana was caught up in a story that involved royalty, dynastic ambition, divorce and even potential child abduction. It was all about the Spanish throne, at a complicated time for Spanish politics when the whim of Franco mattered.

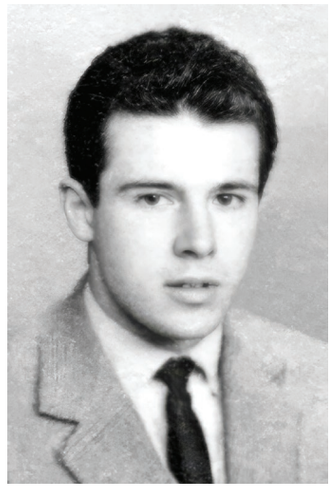
Brothers Alfonso and Gonzalo, who were living in Italy, had been sent to Montana in 1947 by their mother, Emmanuela de Dampierre, daughter of a Roman viscount. The boys' step-father, her second husband, was a stockbroker from Milan. Their real father, however, was Prince Don Jaime, oldest surviving son of Spanish King Alfonso XIII. Alfonso had passed on his royal rights to his younger son, Don Juan. But the Succession Law of 1947 bequeathed the power to choose the next monarch to General Franco. Don Juan was contesting Franco's law and claiming the throne for his son, also called Juan (or Juanito - "little Juan"). Don Jaime was arguing that he was the rightful heir and his son Alfonso should be king. The fight was on!

For Don Jaime there was a catch and it was an important one. In order to consolidate his son's eligibility for the throne, he would have to bring Alfonso back to be educated in Spain. After the divorce, however, Emmanuela had done everything she could to keep her boys outside of Spain's fiery politics. From Italy she sent them to the "fashionable Montana College" as it was named in newspaper reports of the drama. The boys could speak fluent English, Italian, French and German, but not one word of Spanish. The situation hotted up when Don Jaime sent representatives to the Zugerberg to demand that the boys be handed over. Director Ostermayer refused. He cited the rights of the boys to express an opinion about their future and the boys did not want to go. The matter was pursued in Zug and in Paris, but none of the courts found that they had the right to turn the boys over to their father as their mother had been granted custody. Ostermayer was happy with the result and the free publicity the school enjoyed in the media coverage of the dispute.

Alfonso and Gonzalo stayed at Montana for another year and both left when Alfonso graduated from the Italian Section in 1954. Finally, it was Don Juan's son, Juan Carlos, who became the next king of Spain.



Alfonso de Borbon ski jumping on the Zugerberg, 1952



Alfonso de Borbon, 1954



Gonzalo de Borbon, 1953



Alfonso de Borbon takes a turn at throwing the javelin, 1954

Alfonso and Gonzalo did make their first visit to Spain in 1953. After Montana, Alfonso continued his studies in law at the elite Centro de Estudios Universitarios (CEU) in 1955. He went into the diplomatic service and was appointed, by Franco, Spanish ambassador to Sweden in 1970. From 1977 to 1984, Alfonso was President of the Spanish Skiing Federation, and from 1984 to 1987 President of the Spanish Olympic Committee. He died in a horrific accident at Beaver Creek, Colorado, beheaded by a cable with which he collided as it was being raised to support a banner at the finish line of a course at the World Ski Championships. He was 57. Gonzalo lived life in technicolour with a string of fleeting engagements and short marriages and died in Lausanne from leukaemia in 2000, aged 62.

An enduring Montana tradition

The doors of the dining room are thrown open.
Satan - red suit, red eyes, horns and a long moustache -
runs in with his devils. He is followed by St Nicholas,
all in white, accompanied by two angels. A night of speeches
has begun. They will recount, in sometimes embarrassing
detail, the good and the bad things the boys should be
remembered for this year.

So, we think on the 6th of December 1953, began the annual festival of St Nicholas that would morph into its more German Swiss occasion, the visit of Samichlaus. For many years, French teacher Aloys Rosset took the leading role. His poems in all the school languages impressed and inspired and were sufficiently terrifying to send shivers down the young spines of Juventus boys and all those guilty of misdemeanours that might be outed by St Nik. The poems were not merely fleeting embarrassments - a selection was preserved for posterity in the Montanablatt.

Two poems from 1955

Douglas Chapman

Chapman's here, where all can see -
Which is where he wants to be.
Ganz forgetful, full of questions,
To give his teachers indigestions.

Eduard Butot

Nicht ein Kloster ist Montana
schlimmer Mönch in deiner Höhle;
das Chalet ist nicht Nirwana -
Luft braucht auch die ärmste Seele.
Altersheim und Krankenzimmer.
tropisch schwül, feucht und so fort ...
Ach, ich sagt' es dir ja immer:
Lebensgeister weckt der Sport!





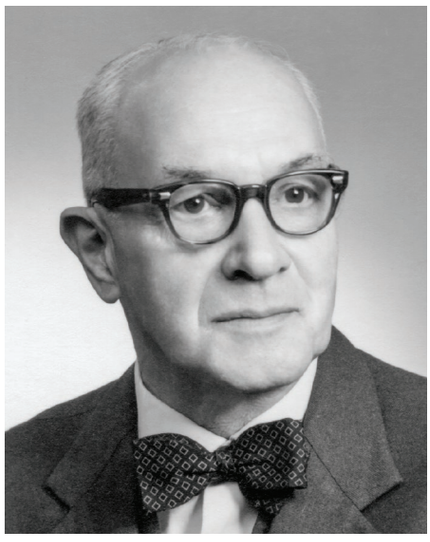
Left: St Nicholas himself, also known as Monsieur Rosset.
Above: It was a tradition that would endure for years to come.
Here is Mr Mather accosted by a Fitze-wielding devil in 1975.

Montana staff in caricatures

In the early 1950s, the bespectacled and bowtie-wearing teacher
Max Schiess created some irreverently-styled caricatures of his colleagues.



Top left to bottom right:
Gianfranco Chimenti
Aloys Rosset
Paul Legras
Dr Josef Ostermayer
Carla Manganelli
Lucie Gautschi
Heidi Bär
Henry Albrecht
Eduard Arnold
Hans Huber
Eugenio Brandi
Adele Beghé







1955 - A revised school brochure

In 1955, Montana published a new brochure still using Tomamichel's trifold design with some updates by the artist. It has more recent promotional photographs including one showing a ski class with Charles Dier. In a redesign of the logo, the flourish of the flower with its frilly leaves has been replaced by a simpler plant, streamlining the design.

The 1950s turn into the 1960s.
That stage of life called "youth" evolves
A farewell written by American Section Dean Thomas Beczkiewicz in 1964 is a resonant testament to the Montana of the time. Although Beczkiewicz was only at the school for a couple of years in the early 1960s, his farewell words eloquently frame the 1950s approach of guiding young boys towards adulthood:

It is a special way in a special world on our mountain. It is pure, sharp air we breathe, free from the contamination of the environment below, as an accomplishment fused with right values forms the norms of our existence, free from external and negative influences. Thus our life has been special in its essential goodness, in which simplicity and well-being allow us to learn and to grow. In this splendid isolation, we remain aloof to the crises which may be our future commitment, until we are strong enough and wise enough to cope with them.

Student pieces in the Montanablatt concur, showing how many Montana students felt connected to nature on their mountain, with reflections on the changing seasons, the drama of the weather, being woken by birdsong. But we are about to enter a decade known for social change. Especially for those on the journey from child to adult.

Poem by Thomas Beczkiewicz, 1963

School is a seldom hour
Of falling stars caught between bells
When boys splinter truth in ringing days.
High nerves ripple careless notes of A's
And F's as laughter counterpoints the ding
Dong cry of right and wrong.
And fingers first touch the underside of leaves.
School is a wistful time
Of counting long hopes before June.
Blue jeans twist to squareless roots of hate
And love as they conjugate the verb
To be in smaller tragedies than they
Can tell or wish to tell.
Boys, too, grow wise against their will.



AN ESTABLISHED INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL 1960 *to* 1980

Montana vacillates constantly between stability and change.

Editorial Yearbook 1973



Above photo and on previous page:
In 1967 and 1968, the Swiss photographer Peter Ammon took these photos using Kodak 4 x 5-inch color film.

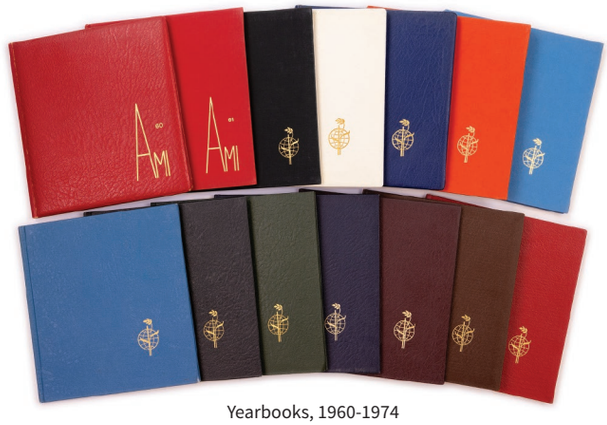
Stability and Change

The 1950s turn into the 1960s. On the Zugerberg, the dregs of war have been tidied up and broken buildings rebuilt. The world outside is reconnecting as war-fractured nations heal. Students arrive, numbers are healthy. Josef and Elisabeth Ostermayer will operate the school for another twenty years, a period of much-needed stability.

The remote idyll that was the "Berg der Jugend", "La Montagne de la Jeunesse" and described with eloquence by Thomas Beczkiewicz, will become less remote, conceptually as well as physically. The 1950s turn into the 1960s that turn into the 1970s. Travelling is more mainstream and old ways of thinking that had been framed by colonialism are replaced by a bigger picture, one that questions the social and political conventions of a previous generation. They are questions that provoke protests sending out ripples that can not help but lap against the Zugerberg's grassy banks.

That stage of life called "youth" evolves. Approaches to schooling, both what is taught and how, adjust. At Montana, sometime between 1965 and 1973, the ban on blue jeans at school is repealed. Although such a path is never smooth, Montana adjusts. Ausgang terms will loosen up.

The American Section Yearbook began in the school year 1959 / 1960 and is also a record of social change during Ostermayer's long tenure as Director. From the formally posed shiny young men of the 1960s to the shaggy-haired, jeans-clad students of the 1970s. From the era of jazz music on your radio a little too loud via school beat bands to articulate musings on punk rock in the Montanablatt.



Yearbooks, 1960-1974

We see teachers developing too, and some magnificent, empathetic educators across the school's sections guiding a cohort of young men (and a few, as yet, young women) towards life in this changing world as the quiet but assured presence of the Director holds the school together.

The Yearbook editor of 1973 observed the phenomenon with insight:

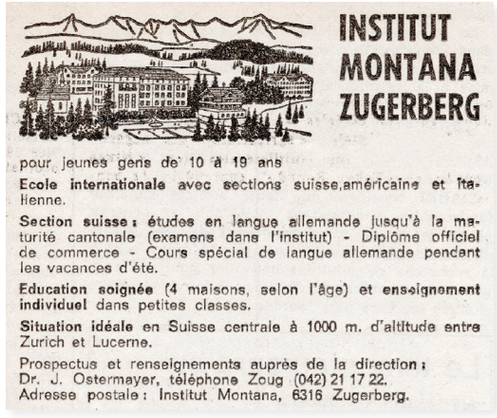
Having been at Montana for six years, I have experienced both the stability and the changes here. Since I first came, students and teachers alike have come and gone. Mr. Litz has taught me French for four years, yet no science teacher has taught me any two science courses. I have lined up at meals innumerable times, yet over the years sat at six different tables. I have lived in Juventus, Felsenegg, and Grosses Haus with people from all over the world. And so on. All of this simply goes to show that Montana vacillates constantly between stability and change. The degree to which these two elements are present makes each year different. In this yearbook the Yearbook Staff has tried to present a chronicle of these two elements in interaction. To achieve this perfectly is an impossible task but we believe the attempt is nevertheless worthwhile. In any case, we hope you enjoy the finished product.
The Editor (he was Lee Hall, an American living in Switzerland).

Demographics
Global developments would always impact on recruitment and the mix of students who would be drawn to an international school on a Swiss mountain.

Montana settled at a total of around 230 students, the optimal number, Ostermayer saw, to retain the character of the school as well as the fit with the facilities of the time. He set a cap of sixteen students in any classroom for pedagogical reasons, but, as he wrote, that was the largest number any classroom could accommodate anyway.

The school had covered a vast age range, with youngest pupils aged only seven or even six and some older students reaching twenty-one or twenty-two. Admissions regulations needed to be reprinted in 1961, giving Ostermayer the opportunity to change this. The needs of much older or younger pupils were different, he well understood, and the school would be better focussed by setting a minimum age at ten and keeping the upper limit for admission at eighteen.

While the total school population was consistent, numbers fluctuated between national groups. Global geopolitical and economic factors would blow in directions that impacted differently on different parts of the world. Currency exchange issues were a repeated concern and negotiations with the various school authorities over curriculum and recognition a relentless task. The dominant groups remained Italian, German, American and Swiss with the number of Dutch students decreasing. Fluctuations could be dramatic. Germans had a high of 80 in 1961 but would drop to 43 in 1966.


INSTITUT MONTANA ZUGERBERG

pour jeunes gens de 10 à 19 ans

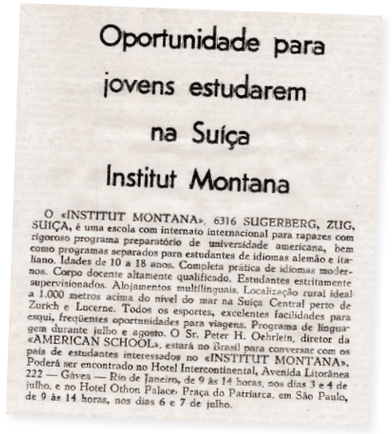
Ecole internationale avec sections suisse,américaine et italienne.

Section suisse : études en langue allemande jusqu'à la maturité cantonale (examens dans l'institut) - Diplôme officiel de commerce - Cours spécial de langue allemande pendant les vacances d'été.

Education soignée (4 maisons, selon l'âge) et **enseignement individuel** dans petites classes.

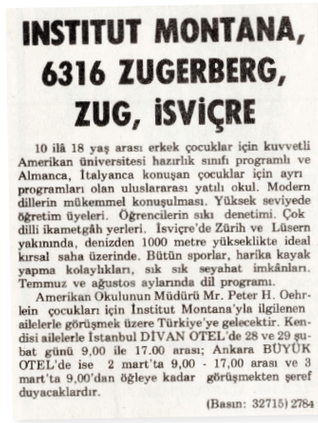
Situation idéale en Suisse centrale à 1000 m. d'altitude entre Zurich et Lucerne.

Prospectus et renseignements auprès de la direction :
Dr. J. Ostermayer, téléphone Zoug (042) 21 17 22.
Adresse postale : Institut Montana, 6316 Zugerberg.


Oportunidade para jovens estudarem na Suíça

Institut Montana

O «INSTITUT MONTANA», 6316 SUGERBERG, ZUG, SUIÇA, é uma escola com internato internacional para rapazes com rigoroso programa preparatório de universidade americana, bem como programas separados para estudantes de idiomas alemão e italiano. Idades de 10 a 18 anos. Completa prática de idiomas modernos. Corpo docente altamente qualificado. Estudantes estritamente supervisionados. Alojamentos multilinguais. Localização rural ideal a 1.000 metros acima do nível do mar na Suíça Central perto de Zurich e Lucerne. Todos os esportes, excelentes facilidades para esqui, freqüentes oportunidades para viagens. Programa de linguagem durante julho e agosto. O Sr. Peter H. Oehrlein, diretor da «AMERICAN SCHOOL», estará no Brasil para conversar com os pais de estudantes interessados no «INSTITUT MONTANA». Poderá ser encontrado no Hotel Intercontinental, Avenida Litorânea 222 — Gávea — Rio de Janeiro, de 9 às 14 horas, nos dias 3 e 4 de julho, e no Hotel Othon Palace, Praça do Patriarca, em São Paulo, de 9 às 14 horas, nos dias 6 e 7 de julho.


INSTITUT MONTANA, 6316 ZUGERBERG, ZUG, İSVİÇRE

10 ilâ 18 yaş arası erkek çocuklar için kuvvetli Amerikan üniversitesi hazırlık sınıfı programlı ve Almanca, İtalyanca konuşan çocuklar için ayrı programları olan uluslararası yatılı okul. Modern dillerin mükemmel konuşulması. Yüksek seviyede öğretim üyeleri. Öğrencilerin sıkı denetimi. Çok dilli ikametgâh yerleri. İsviçre'de Zürih ve Lüsern yakınında, denizden 1000 metre yükseklikte ideal kırsal saha üzerinde. Bütün sporlar, harika kayak yapma kolaylıkları, sık sık seyahat imkânları. Temmuz ve ağustos aylarında dil programı.

Amerikan Okulunun Müdürü Mr. Peter H. Oehrlein çocukları için İnstitut Montana'yla ilgilenen ailelerle görüşmek üzere Türkiye'ye gelecektir. Kendisi ailelerle İstanbul DİVAN OTEL'de 28 ve 29 şubat günü 9,00 ile 17.00 arası; Ankara BÜYÜK OTEL'de ise 2 mart'ta 9,00 - 17,00 arası ve 3 mart'ta 9,00'dan öğleye kadar görüşmekten şeref duyacaklardır.

(Basın: 32715) 2784


INSTITUT MONTANA, 6316 ZUGERBERG, ZUG, SWITZERLAND

انستیتوی مونتانا ، یك‌سازمان‌آموزشی پسرانه شبانه روزی است که دارای برنامه های فشرده ودقیق مقدمه‌ای دانشگاه های آمریکائی ، وبرنامه‌های جداگانه برای دانش‌آموزان‌آلمانی وایتالیائی زبان است . سن داوطلبان باید بین ۱۰ تا ۱۸ سال باشد . تمرین و مکالمه زبان های مدرن ،استادان و مربیان درجه اول دانش‌آموزان تحت سرپرستی و نظارت دقیق خواهند بود . دارای تالار های مسکونی برای اقامت‌دانش‌آموزان بازبان‌های گوناگون. انستیتوی مونتانا در نواحی‌روستائی ایده‌آل مرکزی سوئیس ، نزدیك زوریخ و لوسرن — در ارتفاع هزار متری سطح دریاقراردارد. با تسهیلات لازم برای کلیه‌ورزشها بویژه اسکی . امکانات فراوان سفر . برنامه های ویژه‌زبان بین ماههای جولای واوت.

رئیس مدرسه امریکائی فوق Mr. Peter H. Oehrlein

درروزهای ۵ و ٦ مارس (۱۵ و ۱٦ اسفند) برای مذاکره باوالدین دانش آموزانی که علاقمند به‌تحصیل‌در انستیتوی مونتاناهستند، در هتل اینترکنتیننتال تهران خواهد بود .

Advertising outreach in 1976, including (at bottom) a publication in Iran prior to the Islamic Revolution.

The economic downturn of the mid 1970s reduced applications especially from Switzerland and the United States. However, recruitment from economically emerging countries in the Middle East and South America, and from Turkey and Pakistan, kept the American Section strong. These boys were from wealthy families who sought educational opportunities that would enhance future choices for their sons. It also meant that Montana was less dependent on the few nations for which it offered sections and was becoming more truly international.

While Montana was officially non-denominational, it was located in the Catholic Canton of Zug and had a strong Catholic element. When Peter Oehrlein arrived from America in 1962, he commented on how many of the students had to attend mass in the chapel every Sunday. Pfarrer Joseph Hauswirth, also a close friend of the Ostermayer family, was the resident Catholic priest and counsellor to many Montana students. But diversity continued and would increase as the American Section particularly developed a more global outreach. The Imam Musthaq Ahmad Bajwa, a celebrated Islam cleric who had been many years based in London, moved to Switzerland in the 1970s and became a well-known figure to boys across the school. The Protestant angle was covered by an external vicar, the Reverend Thomas Quin, for most of the 1970s.

Under Ostermayer, Montana was becoming an educational establishment that was strong and stable. The Director was pleased that the positive numbers allowed the introduction of more selective criteria for admission as well as strict adherence to dismissal for difficult behaviour. He reported that external examination results continued to be excellent.



A posed scene of a spring day on campus, circa 1967



The Chapel, circa 1967



The Ostermayer family – Elisabeth, Peter, Wolfgang, Dr Josef Ostermayer and Verena

Day students

A significant change in this period was the arrival of day students, now often called “externs”. It did not happen through a policy decision but as a response to a specific request concerning the Italian Section.

Montana began as a boarding school for boys that fulfilled its vision by students (and teachers) living on campus. Students and staff sharing their daily lives together was a component to the Integration that was central to how Montana practised Internationalism (two of the founding principles). Josef Ostermayer fully supported this characteristic of the school even while his three children, as “day students”, were the exceptions. However, Wolfgang, Verena and Peter Ostermayer lived in the Director’s house on campus with parents whose lives were intricately entwined with the life of the school.

The mid 1960s saw an influx of Italian “guest” workers and their families into Switzerland and the story of the integration of day students into the Montana community is linked with this external factor. If these families were considered permanent residents in Switzerland, it would be correct to integrate their children into the Swiss school system.

However, from a federal government perspective, they were "guest" workers. It was assumed that they would, at some stage, return to Italy. How much better if their sons could continue their Italian schooling during their stay. The Italian authorities pointed out that the Italian Section at Institut Montana was de facto an Italian school. Ostermayer was urged to make provision for them. The idea was supported by the President of the Italian Section, Renato Lucchetti, and by the President of Trustees, Alfred Teobaldi, who enabled a scholarship to be established to support talented boys from these working class families to attend the school. There would be a modest tuition fee for day students and a limited number of boarders at a 75% reduction of the usual cost.

The project started in 1966. By 1970 there were six boarders on the scholarship and 25 external students. Numbers continued to grow, and in 1975 there were 51 external students. Ostermayer wrote approvingly about how the admission of these boys, carefully selected, had raised the academic performance of the whole section.

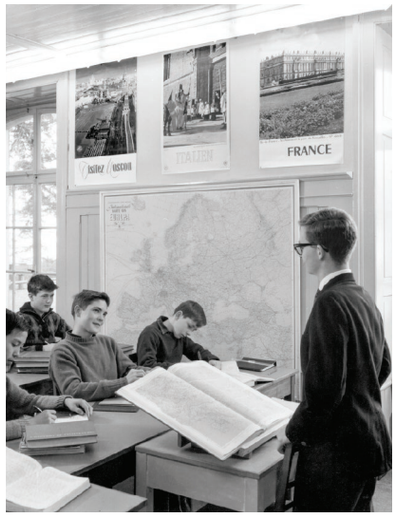
Two of those Italian day students talked about their experience in the Montanablatt of Christmas 1978. They both focus on long days of travel for a short time at school. One, Antonio Morciano, describes "Casa-Scuola: cronaca di un viaggio". He travels everyday from Zürich, leaving the house at 6.30, then taking a tram, then a train to Zug and then the bus to Schönegg and the Zugerbergbahn to arrive at school at 8:15. When the school bell rings at 1pm they run "like madmen" for the funicular. The other, Nicola Carcano, in "Parla un Esterno", also describes the rigours of the journey to school. Life for those Italian day students was, it seems, quite different to that of the boarders. They left before lunch, excluded from those afternoons of sports and activities that were part of Montana life for the rest of the student population of the time.

The transition to enrolling day students would be different for the rest of the school. As the number of expat families in Zug increased, Montana opened day student places for which they could charge high fees. Unlike the sons of Italian "guest" workers, these students were well integrated in the school, staying for lunch and joining sports and activities. In 1976, there were eight Swiss and one Dutch living in Zug as day students and one American Section boy, Edward Asfour, who lived in Zürich. By 1978, there was a total of 76 day students with 220 boarders. However, in Ostermayer's time, the school was still known and advertised simply as a boarding school.









Students in class, 1964

Internationalism and Integration in the 1960s and 1970s

A school of an indeterminate number of sections
The Press came to visit in 1976 to report on the 50th birthday of the school. There were two newspaper articles, both describing it as an auspicious event at a renowned international school. They are intrigued by the school organisation and take time to describe the mix of sections. At the core, they both report, is the Swiss department where the language is German, and then there are Italian, American, Dutch, French, English and Spanish Sections.

Evidently, these are newspaper reports and not quite in line with real life. Reality was more nuanced and the organisational model was not (in theory) about any one nationality, nor its section, having precedence. But the reporters had absorbed the Montana evolution where practical arrangements and a sense of belonging focused on the section in which the pupil studied.

The almost autonomous Italians
As we have seen, the Leader of the section was appointed by and worked for the Italian government. During this period, however, certain teachers stayed on the Zugerberg rather than returning to Italy and became more a part of Montana.

Giovanni Corrado came to be regarded as a close associate by Ostermayer and was known by colleagues as calm and good-hearted. He arrived at Montana in 1952, led the section between 1958 and 1964 and then stayed with the school until 1976, acting as Hausleiter of Grosses Haus from 1964.

Renato Lucchetti succeeded Giovanni Corrado as leader of the section, a post in which he remained until 1970. He and his wife became close friends of Josef and Elisabeth Ostermayer and could not escape the magic of the Zugerberg. For eighteen years, Signor Lucchetti returned to work with the Summer School, bringing his whole family for unforgettable summers on the Montana campus.

The Italian Section at Montana had qualities that differentiated it from other Italian schools and that encouraged teachers like Corrado and Lucchetti to stay. The opportunity to share life with the different nationalities in the school community, the small classes and the richness of the extracurricular opportunities, were all factors that favoured Montana. Corrado wrote in the Montanablatt that he found a lively approach to curriculum that was sometimes lacking in other schools, evidenced in accounts of project weeks that would culminate with exhibitions in the Aula.



Henry Albrecht, teacher of English (left) and Dr Hugo Bruggisser, teacher of German and History (below), 1963.







Above: Dr Charles Schnyder, science teacher, 1963
Right: Jan de Jong, Dutch teacher, 1963



The stamp of the Italian Section, 1954.



Italian Section letterhead

The international feel to the Italian school in Switzerland is personified in teacher Anthony Smith. An Englishman who, before Montana, taught English in Lisbon and Milan, he had previously worked with a bank in India. He came to Montana to become fluent in the three languages (he was excluding Rumantsch we gather) spoken in Switzerland. In an interview to mark his 15 years at the school, he explained the factors that distinguished Montana and the students he taught in the Italian Section. Their thinking skills and serious approach to their work made them a joy to teach. They also achieved excellent results.

As well as the day students, there was an upturn in Italian boarders applying to the school. Ostermayer ascribed this to Italian families becoming frustrated with the education system at home and seeking something different on the peace of a Swiss mountain. It was a period of political unrest in Italy, and the relative safety of that Swiss mountain might also have been a factor.



In 1968, Dr Ostermayer received the Award of Merit from the Prime Minister of Italy, Aldo Moro, in recognition of Montana's Italian school in Switzerland.

The American Section

The American Section yearbook that began in the school year 1959/60 presents a jocular community of between 40 and 70 teenagers, close knit and mutually supportive, with a set of respected teachers who are, evidently, big characters. Thomas Beczkiewicz became Dean when Emory Trosper left in 1961. He was succeeded in 1964 by Glen Robertson who taught English and mathematics. In 1968, the post was taken by Peter Oehrlein, who had arrived as a young teacher in 1962. Peter Oehrlein's St Bernard, Abigail, joined the school in 1977 and became an integral part of the community.



Right: Dean of the American Section, Peter Oehrlein, in 1965, photo by David Kane. Below: Oehrlein and his St. Bernard, Abigail, in 1977



As the 1960s progressed, the American Section became increasingly international. When Peter Oehrlein arrived, he observed that the vast majority of students in the American Section held American passports although their addresses were elsewhere as their parents worked overseas. Gradually, however, students were coming from South America and Turkey, Africa especially Liberia, and then Asia especially India and Pakistan. In these emerging economies, a school in Switzerland was a prestigious stepping stone en route to universities in the United States. Husmann's collaborator, Dr Alfred Teobaldi, on the Board of Trustees, became involved in ensuring the school looked after its increasing number of Muslim students. He oversaw the necessary adjustments to the catering, arranged for an Imam visit the school to give lectures, and nurtured connections with the Zürich mosque so that Montana boys could attend ceremonies there.

The loose curriculum on which Emory Trosper had worked in the 1950s remained in place, with some modernising tweaks. Mathematics received an update and the increasing number of non-native English speakers encouraged the introduction of a special programme of intensive English as a foreign language.

In 1965, Oehrlein introduced a music and arts appreciation course, initiating a tradition that would be long-standing. The creativity of each class was challenged with the requirement to write a short play or musical; staging these plays on "Class Night" became a major annual event. The Aula was transformed for the occasion with ambitious sets built by students who scripted, acted, sang and danced. The students themselves were also transformed by make-up, wigs and outlandish, sometimes very scanty, costumes. Teachers had to attend ready for anything. In 1978, the popular and respected teacher Mrs Pelech (Joan, taught many subjects including German and literature, lived in Juventus) was played by Abigail (that much-loved St. Bernard).

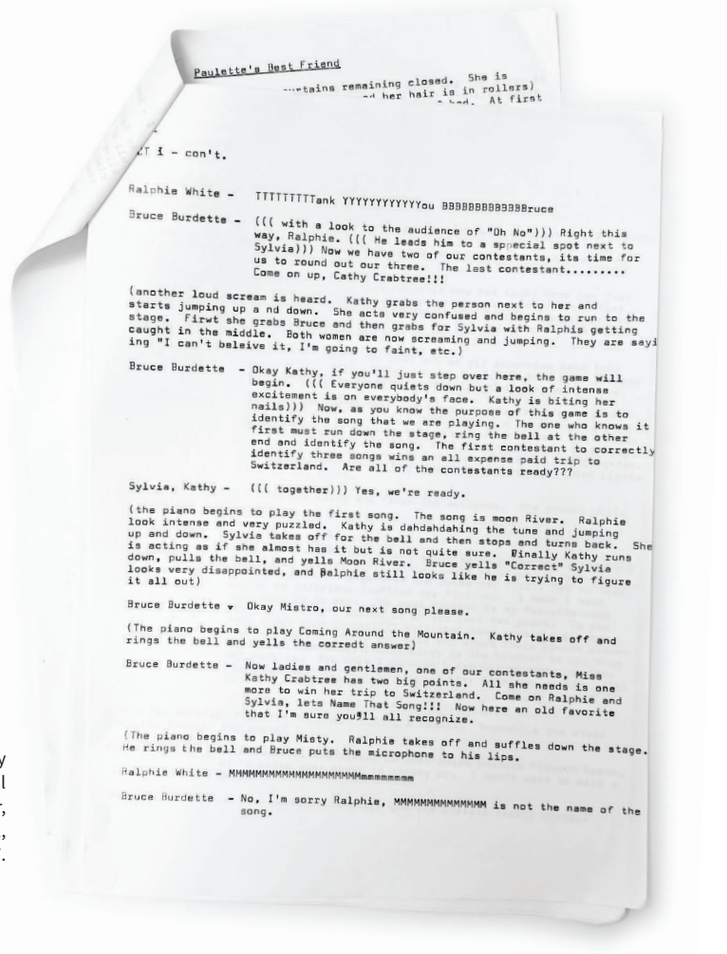
In the 84th edition of the Montanablatt, 1976, Peter Oehrlein celebrated the 10th anniversary of the event, describing its beginnings on a rickety stage:

Does CLASS NIGHT continue to fulfil its purpose? I think so. Many boys discover they have talents in painting, acting, writing or construction which they never before had a chance to develop.

Other events turned into American Section traditions. A cook-out to start the new school year was orchestrated by John Mather, who arrived in 1971 to teach biology and who is going to play a long and important part in this history. His name quickly became synonymous with hiking on Sundays, copious amounts of hotdogs and potato salad. November saw the annual Halloween party. Thanksgiving was celebrated at a restaurant in Zürich with an opportunity for boys to have an afternoon in the big city.

The Yearbooks of these years are almost exclusively about life in the American Section. They only briefly mention their overall Director Joseph Ostermayer and little about the rest of the school beyond school sports teams on which members of the group might play. This too will change.





Paulette's Best Friend

...tains remaining closed. She is ...d her hair is in rollers) ...d. At first

XT i - con't.

Ralphie White - TTTTTTTTTank YYYYYYYYYYYou BBBBBBBBBBBBruce

Bruce Burdette - (((with a look to the audience of "Oh No"))) Right this way, Ralphie. (((He leads him to a special spot next to Sylvia))) Now we have two of our contestants, its time for us to round out our three. The last contestant..... Come on up, Cathy Crabtree!!!

(another loud scream is heard. Kathy grabs the person next to her and starts jumping up a nd down. She acts very confused and begins to run to the stage. Firwt she grabs Bruce and then grabs for Sylvia with Ralphis getting caught in the middle. Both women are now screaming and jumping. They are seyi ing "I can't beleive it, I'm going to faint, etc.)

Bruce Burdette - Okay Kathy, if you'll just step over here, the game will begin. (((Everyone quiets down but a look of intense excitement is on everybody's face. Kathy is biting her nails))) Now, as you know the purpose of this game is to identify the song that we are playing. The one who knows it first must run down the stage, ring the bell at the other end and identify the song. The first contestant to correctly identify three songs wins an all expense paid trip to Switzerland. Are all of the contestants ready???

Sylvia, Kathy - (((together))) Yes, we're ready.

(the piano begins to play the first song. The song is moon River. Ralphie look intense and very puzzled. Kathy is dahdahdahing the tune and jumping up and down. Sylvia takes off for the bell and then stops and turns back. She is acting as if she almost has it but is not quite sure. Finally Kathy runs down, pulls the bell, and yells Moon River. Bruce yells "Correct" Sylvia looks very disappointed, and Ralphie still looks like he is trying to figure it all out)

Bruce Burdette - Okay Mistro, our next song please.

(The piano begins to play Coming Around the Mountain. Kathy takes off and rings the bell and yells the corredt answer)

Bruce Burdette - Now ladies and gentlemen, one of our contestants, Miss Kathy Crabtree has two big points. All she needs is one more to win her trip to Switzerland. Come on Ralphie and Sylvia, lets Name That Song!!! Now here an old favorite that I'm sure you'll all recognize.

(The piano begins to play Misty. Ralphie takes off and suffles down the stage. He rings the bell and Bruce puts the microphone to his lips.

Ralphie White - MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMmmmmmm

Bruce Burdette - No, I'm sorry Ralphie, MMMMMMMMMMMMM is not the name of the song.

Photos and script from a Class Night play "Paulette's Best Friend", written by teacher Paul Juhl with roles played by Kenneth Cooper, Nicolas Gargour, Glenn Jewell, Constantin Windisch-Graetz, and others, 1977.

"Swiss Section"
In terms of nationalities, most of the students in the Swiss Section were from Germany, with Swiss nationals in the minority. Some documents talk about the "German Section". There were also the French and Dutch students studying for their Maturas, who had their national groupings and Heads of Sections. There were boys from beyond these core countries - Spain and South America - but many of these were sons of Swiss families living overseas.

Having obtained federal recognition for the Montana Handelsdiplom in 1971, Ostermayer was determinedly pursuing his goal of a federally recognised Matura. By May 1970, he could see that conditions were becoming more favourable, there were other Swiss private schools on a similar path who were awarded federal approval. He submitted a thoroughly prepared application to the authorities. The path to final recognition was not hasty and involved inspection visits by several universities. It was finally granted in 1976 so that the Matura at Montana enabled entrance to all Swiss universities including the ETH and including for overseas students. For Ostermayer, this was a major achievement after years of effort.

Ostermayer himself remained closely involved with the Swiss section, attending its teacher conferences and discussing pedagogy with its staff. The Italian and American Sections were more fully run by their respective Deans, with Ostermayer attending some of the conferences. He was aware, he wrote, of the tendency of the different sections to lean towards autonomy - it was something that he watched vigilantly to keep under control.

The busy Dutch Section
Adrianus Pronk headed the Dutch Section from 1965 to 1968, when he handed over to Jelle Stegeman. The young Herr Stegeman, a recent graduate from university, was enjoying the vibrant life of Amsterdam and intended to stay in Switzerland only for a year. He would turn out to be another one on whom the Magic Mountain cast its spell, remaining on the Zugerberg until well into the next century, retiring from the school in 2007. Having put down roots in Switzerland, Stegeman combined his teaching with pure academics, becoming a researcher and then professor at the University of Zürich, publishing articles and books about linguistics and related subjects. Many of his essays were published in the "Feuilleton" of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. He was later appointed as a professor at the University of Leiden (NL).

The section remained identifiably Dutch while students could pursue their academics in the other sections to study in German for the Swiss Matura or in English for the High School Diploma.



The graduates of the Swiss Gymnasium, 1960 and 1961



The Dutch Section, 1966



Students by the Chapel in December of 1964

In the afternoons, that time that was still assigned to activities and sports, the Dutch boys attended Herr Stegeman's classes in Dutch on Dutch history, language and literature. They were examined on their strengths in these subjects at the end of their course by an external assessor, who discussed each boy's achievements with their teacher. It was this addition to their programme that meant that their Canton of Zug Matura could be recognised to earn entrance to universities across the Netherlands.

The sharing of coffee and cake, the celebration of the Queen's birthday, and enjoyment of field hockey, all contributed to the "Dutchness" of the section.

The diminishing French Section

Numbers of French or French speaking students were so small by the 1970s that it could barely be called a "section" but it remained an identity with its leader Aloys Rosset. Monsieur Rosset's Montana career almost exactly coincided with Josef Ostermayer. He arrived on the Zugerberg in 1947 and retired in 1981. Celebration of French language and culture, with the activities of the Club de la Culture Française, bringing classic French theatre to the stage (often with Monsieur Rosset in a starring role) and many contributions to the Montanablatt by Aloys Rosset and his students, perpetuated the French wing of the school.



Aloys Rosset, 1962

School Life

The structure of boarding life remained very much the same as earlier. The chimes of the wake-up and breakfast bells, the insistence of the Aufsicht teachers, they were all still part of the ritual. That ambiance of privilege, like an expensive perfume, still lingered. In the 1960s when Peter Oehrlein arrived he was most impressed by service reminiscent of a 5-star hotel:

The lasagna served in the dining room at lunch on Fridays was incredible, the laundry mended anything and everything so that not a stitch of clothing had to be thrown out, and students and teachers could put their shoes outside the door of their rooms and the next morning find them polished.

Memories of the time, recalled by former students and staff, conjure up the scene in the dining room as, on special occasions, carefully selected wine was carried to the Director's table and poured ceremoniously by "maître d'hôtel" Mario into his glass. The Ostermayers, we understand, would take care to ensure that the bottle would last several days. Grace in Latin precedes the repast. The dining hall was still the dining hall of a former era, with white table cloths and food that was served, by young ladies dressed in their black and white uniforms, to young men who were expected to behave in a way that was "proper" for their social standing. But this is a boys' boarding school - it would be unsurprising if that behaviour resisted the temptation to launch bread balls skywards, perhaps to descend to earth somewhere near the Director's table. Accidentally.

But the music played in students' rooms and the devices on which they played it (and the achievable volume), were changing. There were skateboards on campus.

The people who had to stay with the zeitgeist while maintaining all the principles of healthy communal life were the houseparents and the teachers who lived at the school. Changes were happening here too. The school had begun resolutely residential, for staff as well as students, both for the sake of the internationality of their shared space and for the cultivating of family style relationships. Josef Ostermayer perpetuated the practice by living on campus with his family. But it was a model that could not last. At first, in the 1950s, it was only the Swiss teachers who taught in the Swiss Section who had homes in the local area. A salary framework developed with Swiss paid at a higher level as teachers in the American and Italian Sections were living in school with board and lodging as part of their wage along with duties in the boarding houses. They rarely stayed longer than two years. But then Peter Oehrlein developed a commitment to Montana and to staying in Switzerland that included a life beyond Schönegg:



Reading on the Chalet balcony, photo by Wim van Ewijk, 1964



A contentious card game, photo by David Kane, 1965



Richard Harms playing and singing in the Chalet, photo by Craig Kerr, 1964

In 1969, a year after I had become the Dean of the American Section, Dr. Ostermayer, the Director of Institut Montana, allowed me to marry and to live off campus with the salary of an "extern".

It kicked off the change. Soon, Jelle Stegeman followed and then more American Section teachers would take the option to stay longer adding to the professionalism of the department and greater continuity in their teaching, although the salary differential was, for some time, ironed into the fabric of school economics.

Some major players in the story continued their lives on campus. There were sports teacher Charles Dier, Head of Felsenegg for many years, and his wife Alice who worked in the school office. Giovanni Corrado was the long-serving Head of Grosses Haus and was known for his skill at maintaining authority while building strong bonds with the students in his care. Among House Mothers, Hedwig Kinker in Juventus, Luigia Ragazzini in Felsenegg and Elsa Realini in Grosses Haus and Chalet all spent many years living and working at Montana.

John Mather arrived in 1971 to teach in the American Section. Some said that his previous career in the New Zealand Navy had well equipped him for dealing with the challenges of a boarding school. The years will show that his skills and qualities went far beyond life on a ship (although we shall return to the sea later, on an old boat off the Dutch coast) and were reflected in the consistency with which he handled anything Montana students could throw at him. Which, of course, they did. As former student Cary Harrison (then Carroll Sudler) would later write:

Mr. Mather was one of the funniest people I had ever met who was a grown-up.

In the 1960s the rules around time off the Berg were still restrictive although gradually relaxing. The 1964 iteration of school rules states that students aged 13 to 16 could go to Zug (with written permission of the Director) on Saturday afternoon. Those over 16 could go on both Saturday and Sunday. The latest return time was 7 pm. Officially. The rules emphasised that an Ausgang is not a right but a privilege, dependent on diligent work and good behaviour.





Boarding life 1969 and 1971.
Above: A young boy studying, books and typewriter at the ready. Below: An older student with his record player, reel-to-reel tape machine and albums on display - Woodstock and Astrud Gilberto

As remembered by Mansour Saleh Al Zamil, American Section class of 1978:

There were many rules that we had to abide by. These rules were difficult to adhere to at first, but as time went by, they were manageable. We never had time to do anything but be part of the school's activities. We were kept busy almost all the time. This obviously created the bond we students had with one another and with our teachers. The campus setting was very unique, and played a big part in the bond students and staff had. I personally made lifelong friendships with both my fellow students and teachers. This could not have happened had these teachers not treated us with the utmost love and care.

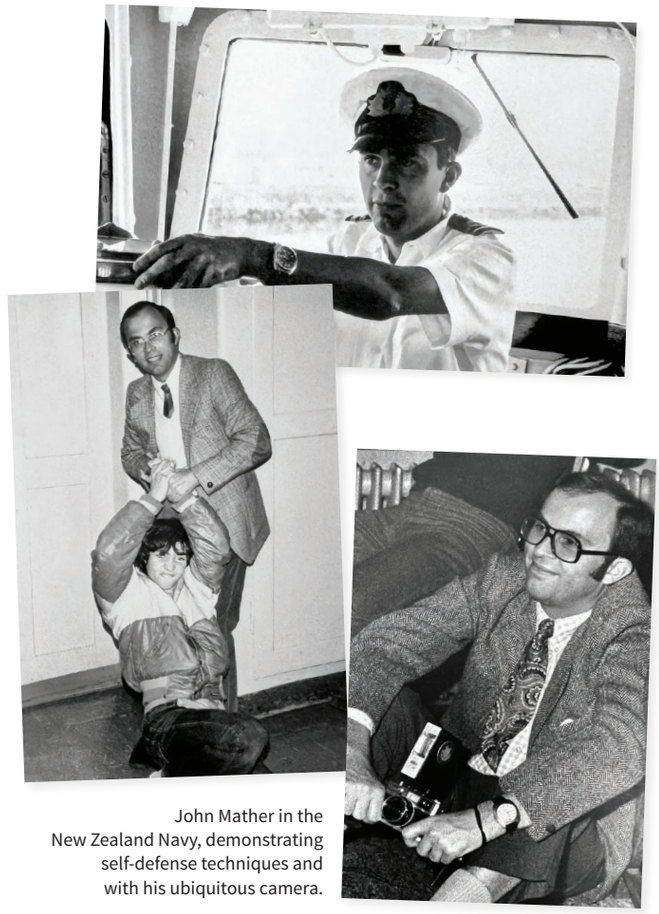
Socialising back on the Zugerberg took on a new energy in 1965, when some Dutch students, with their Head of Section, Adrianus Pronk, set up the lounge in the Felsenegg as a student meeting place. Its specific intent was to provide somewhere students from all the different sections could spend their down time as a community. The name itself - The Clan - was chosen to put the emphasis on uniting the school, as explained in the opening announcement:

Vanwaar bij al deze verscheidenheid de naam "Clan" die toch een grote saamhorigheid veronderstelt? Die saamhorigheid is er, naast alle nationale en individuele verschillen.

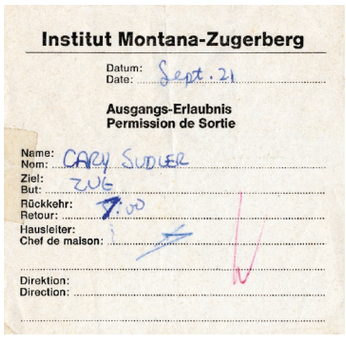
With all this diversity, why the name 'Clan' which nevertheless presupposes great togetherness? That togetherness is there, alongside all the national and individual differences.

There were cheap drinks (coffee, apple juice) served at a bar by a student bar-man. There were newspapers and magazines, table football and chess. There was music, often, in the sixties, songs by the Beatles. Sometimes the music went live as the Clan served as the venue for student bands to bring their sounds to their peers. The Saints in 1966, Tullmich in 1979. Often in the sixties, we are told, the room was wreathed in clouds of cigarette smoke.

Less organised too were the sorties to the supposedly off-limits Resti (restaurant at the Seilbahnstation) or the Wirtschaft. But such deviation from school rules must be the stuff of myths. It never happened and there is no photographic evidence to suggest otherwise.



John Mather in the New Zealand Navy, demonstrating self-defense techniques and with his ubiquitous camera.



Institut Montana-Zugerberg

Datum: Sept. 21
Date:

Ausgangs-Erlaubnis
Permission de Sortie

Name: CARY SUDLER
Nom:
Ziel: ZUG
But:
Rückkehr: 7.00
Retour:
Hausleiter:
Chef de maison:

Direktion:
Direction:

A coveted Ausgang of the Ostermayer era, bearing the mark of the house father and the director.

The "Clan" was set up by Dutch students as a school meeting place but they did include a Netherlands flag, and pictures of a windmill and of a sailing ship labelled "Onze Vloot" (our fleet) as well as a radio.



Organised activities

The list of clubs to keep students busy has grown, adding new activities, such as hi-fi and photography, following developing trends (and technology).

A library club, a Dutch Section initiative out of the Dutch Library, was led by Jelle Stegeman. A "Klub für Zeitgeschehen" convened regularly to discuss such matters as the situation in Vietnam (1968). The session on "Aufwertung" in 1971 was so popular that a larger room was sought. Ostermayer tells us about religious lectures organised separately for Catholics and Protestants in the 1960s, but he adds that interest in these dwindled in the 1970s.

An Italian Section science club under Herr Corrado displayed its experiments in physics and chemistry at an exhibition in the Aula in 1974, part of a series of annual exhibitions of Project Week activities in the Italian Section.

Diversity of cultural expression and language was propelled by initiatives from the Club de la Culture Francaise, such as performances of works by Racine, Molière and la Fontaine directed and produced by Aloys Rosset. American francophone Thomas Litz also immersed himself in the productions and appeared on stage in a lively production of Molière's "Les Précieuses Ridicules" in 1967.

While school brochures still proclaim the international mix of the extra-curricular clubs, other sources, including the memories of former students, suggest that these activities were developing along more section-based, or linguistic, lines.

But music took a boost when Francis Stockwell turned up at Montana. Originally from New Zealand, Stockwell arrived in the American Section in 1969 to teach English, music and art. His love of music and his dedication to teaching helped many students to find a talent that might otherwise have lain dormant and his choir sang in concerts both locally and far afield. The universality of music, its harmonies and its joy, resonates through Montana history from the 1920s to the present day. Another Stockwell achievement was to pass on stories of Montana to his compatriot, John Mather, who would follow Stockwell to the Zugerberg in 1971.



A production of "Les Précieuses ridicules" starring the students Gregor Kazantzis and Steven Moon and the teachers Aloys Rosset and Tom Litz, 1967.





Francis Stockwell in 1976 and performing with the choir. An exceptional pianist, equally comfortable with a comprehensive classical repertoire and boogie woogie, Mr. Stockwell transformed the instruction of music at Montana.

The Montanablatt had developed into a largely Swiss Section project, that would regularly call, to varying degrees of success, for contributions from the wider school community. Throughout these years, however, we see teachers from all sections who contributed, and encouraged their students to contribute, enthusiastically to the magazine. Thomas Litz, for example, an American who arrived at Montana in 1964 to teach French in that section and would later move to the Swiss Section, entertained with extraordinary linguistic versatility:

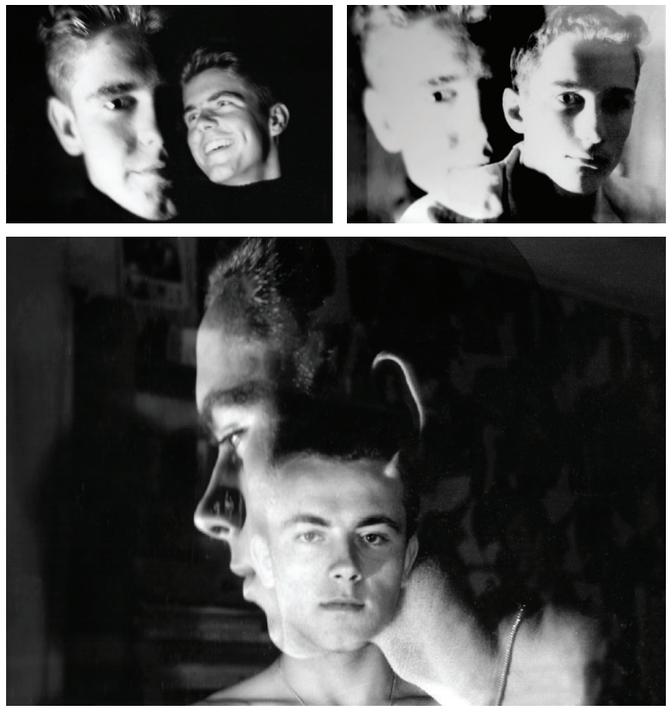
At Mittagessen, the pasta was great and the Bernerteller wasn't bad but the señorita forgot to get us more aqua. Well, anyway, I made it through the week with Ausgang and didn't get Zimmerarrest from the Hausmutter. Sprechen you Montana? Si! (Thomas Litz 1973).

As cameras become increasingly accessible, some beautiful photographs start to appear in the magazine, a vehicle to exercise talents in image-making as well as word-crafting. Those by a young Peter Gidal in the early 1960s stand out. Originally English, Peter Gidal was living in Münich, Germany, when he came to Montana as an American Section Freshman in January 1961. His boyhood ambition was to direct theatre but his path took a slight branch that led to experimental cinema. After studies at Brandeis and Münich universities, he went to the London Royal College of Art and became an internationally acclaimed avant-garde filmmaker and theorist. His work is unconventional, exploring and insightful and includes influential essays and books on art. His 1971 publication "Andy Warhol Films and Paintings" was among the first studies of Warhol's works and is still considered a seminal text on Warhol's art.

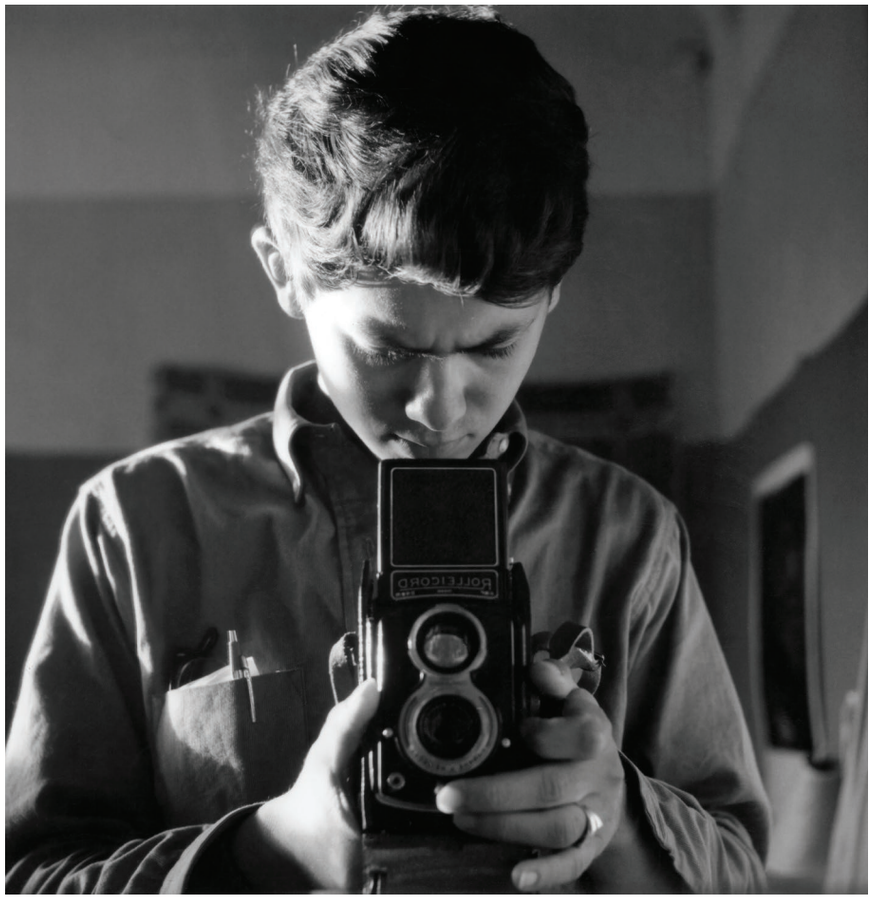
From 1960, the American Section had their record of school life in their Yearbook. It was a rather different publication to the Montanablatt but provides an exuberant record of school life. It was distributed to the section's teachers and students but most of the rest of the school, we understand from a former teacher, was not even aware that there was a Yearbook.



As the technology advanced, students acquired their own cameras and took snapshots of school life as well as experimenting with new photographic techniques. Above, a student with a Contaflex brand camera, 1959.



Students' experiments with double exposure photographic portraits, 1958







Photographs by Peter Gidal, 1962 to 1964

Peter Gidal peering into the viewfinder of a Rolleicord camera while taking his self-portrait in the mirror, 1964. This photo is known today as the “first Montana selfie”.











Student photographic talent of the 1960s



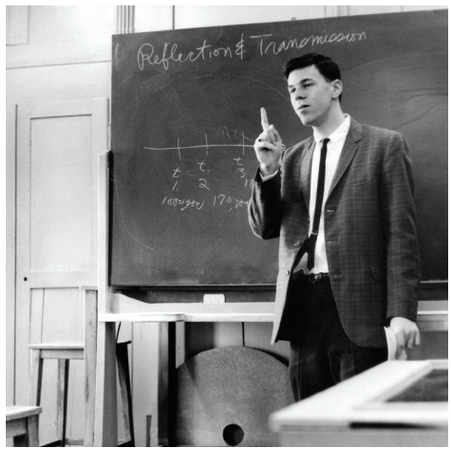
Right: An atmospheric view of the Chalet, photo by Hellmuth Kolb, 1963

Below left: Studying Latin with William Segreto, photo by David Kane, 1964

Below middle: Studying physics with Michael Aronson, photo by David Kane, 1965

Below right: Clearing snow from the ice rink, photo by Christopher Duff, 1965









The rambunctious boys of Juventus in 1966

Looking back over the years, we can see that "activities" was an area that needed constant updating, which came in fits and starts. There were always more activities listed than active. There was also the question of weekends. For much of this period, Saturday morning was still time for formal lessons. There were sports activities on Saturday afternoons, but, for many older students, the main goal for Saturday afternoon would be getting that "Ausgang". Volksmärchen were a feature of Sundays, especially after John Mather took up the mission and encouraged participation in hikes that explored the beauty of the countryside surrounding the school as well as organised excursions across other parts of Switzerland. They began as an American Section activity that gradually attracted a few boys from other parts of the school.
In 1978, Jelle Stegeman was lamenting the absence of organised activities on Sundays. Specifically, his observation acts as a marker of an end to the time when Sunday focus was directed towards attendance at the church services of the Christian faith.

And there was always sport.

Sport on the Zugerberg - and cows
Sports and the name Charles Dier were practically synonymous for many years. Herr Dier taught in three languages across all the sections. As Housefather and Sportsleiter, his reach across the school ensured he was a character known to all students. He ran the teams, organised the training, and supervised skiing on the Zugerberg (while it was still possible) and the regular excursions to resorts at higher altitudes.

There were clubs for football, volleyball, basketball, skiing, hockey and tennis, teaching for beginners and playing in-school tournaments. In the period 1960 to 1966, the division into groups of 14 to 18 students seems still to have operated for sports programmes, especially athletics, and for seating in the dining hall. This was changing and matches and tournaments were becoming inter-section, including those initiated informally, although very enthusiastically, by the students themselves. Sections competed in both American style and European style football, the Americans benefitting from the inclusion of some of the star Italians on their soccer team to achieve victory as they would have been weak against the German team otherwise. Saturday night saw a weekly volleyball match between the American and Italian Sections.



Juventus students heading out on a Volksmarch in 1977 with John Mather and Paul Juhl

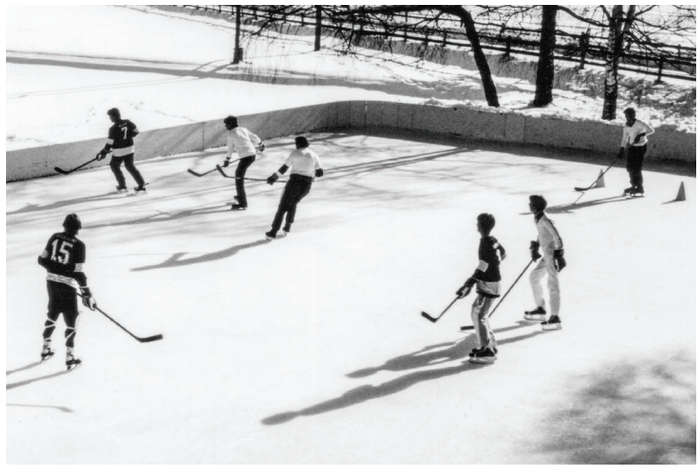




Above: Medals signifying participation on Volksmärchen across Switzerland. Image courtesy of Paul Juhl

Left: The basketball team, photo by David Kane, 1964

Below: Wintertime hockey on campus.



The sentiment expressed in the American Yearbook was, we can read in their reports of in-school matches, shared across the school:

Although there were the usual number of aching muscles, bruises, scraped shins and broken bones, plus arguments galore, the athletic spirit of the Section ran high throughout the year. It was a rare day that anyone looking for a game of some kind could not find at least one.
Yearbook 1960

This period was an active time for sports teams at Montana. For those especially talented, the school teams were the opportunity to take skills to a higher level, especially basketball, athletics, soccer, handball and skiing and they travelled across the country to participate in tournaments. Students from the time report that playing in school teams was where contact with their peers from other sections was made and friendships forged. A young (and already tall) Alexander Biner captained the basketball team in 1978, and made connections with boys from other sections that had been elusive before they represented Montana together on the court.



Charles Dier awarding a ski racing trophy to Fabrizio Hochschild, 1975. Hochschild has gone on to a long career in the United Nations, working in countries such as Afghanistan, Albania, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, Timor-Leste, Serbia, South Sudan, and Tanzania.

As we know, Montana sports fields are surrounded by meadows whose occupants are not always interested in observing rules about keeping off the playing fields. Soccer or cricket - either will do.

Kühe auf dem Sportplatz.
Wir sassen in der Klasse beisammen. Die Stunde begann ganz normal. Ich habe einen guten Sitzplatz am Fenster. Da kann man so schon ... Auf einmal sehe ich Kühe, die auf den Fussballplatz zulaufen. Jetzt betreten sie sogar den schönen Platz von Herrn Dier! Wir dürfen das nicht - diese Kühe! Jetzt rennen sie hin und her - da rennt eine sogar ins Tor hinein. Plötzlich fangen wir an zu lachen. Das ist zu schön: Eine Kuh im Montana-Tor!

Cows on the sports field.
We were sitting together in class. The lesson started normally. I have a good seat by the window. You can see well ... Suddenly I see cows running towards the football pitch. Now they're even going onto Mr. Dier's pitch! We're not allowed to do that – those cows! Now they're running back and forth – one even runs right into the goal. Suddenly we all start laughing. That's just too funny: A cow in the Montana goal!
P. Richner

Cricket: Auch diese Sportart setzt sich auf Montana durch. Die Kühe bekommen ebenfalls ein paar Cricket-Balle zu spüren. Cricket: This sport is also catching on in Montana. The cows get a few cricket balls.
Montanablatt May 1971

Not that cricket ever really caught on at Montana.





Skiing on the Zugerberg, 1968

Montana travels

From the opening of rail routes, roads and borders after World War II, Montana was travelling. The importance of travel was proclaimed in school publicity and in Ostermayer's history as intrinsic to the school's identity as international. Students from all over the world should return to their home countries well acquainted with Switzerland - its scenic beauty, historical sites and important museums. They should have opportunity to explore different cultures and to understand the world as a diverse mix through which they could navigate. It was also for fun.

Within Switzerland, ski trips were already engraved into Montana's winter calendar. By the 1960s, cultural excursions to historic cities were extending their distances to Paris, Rome, London. Visits to the Geneva motor show became a popular annual experience for senior boys. Study linked travel was encouraged, with Handelsmatura students sent on work experience weeks across Switzerland organised by their business teachers. The Swiss Section geology trip each year for seniors was a an epic trek into wild places in Switzerland.

The Travel Workshops that began in the 1950s became increasingly ambitious. Their itineraries would reach across future war zones, places soon to be ripped apart by bullets, on journeys that, now, your government would forbid you to take.

In the spring of 1961, Dean Emory Trosper took 22 students on a study trip that wended its way across historic sites from Italy to Greece via Belgrade. A group went back to Greece in 1965 with teachers Bill Moore, Glen Robertson, Peter Oehrlein and Robert Holweger. In 1966, the same teachers accompanied 14 students to the Middle East, visiting Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, topped off with a few days on the beach.

Subsequently, Peter Oehrlein took over the expeditions, and then John Mather continued in the 1970s, joined by Francis Stockwell. They faced the trials of travelling across the Soviet Union, they met the challenges of India. In 1971 a journey across East Africa included a six-day safari through the Serengeti National Park. While organised by the American Section, the workshops opened to all students and the 1978 Travel Workshop to the Far East had six students from the Swiss Section and nine from the American Section.



A glimpse over the Berlin Wall, 1973, photo by Cary Harrison



Participants on the trip to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, 1976



Bab-e-Khyber, the entrance to the Khyber Pass, 1976, photo by Cary Harrison

Trips were organised over long-distance phone calls, making *"sight-unseen arrangements with fingers crossed"*, as later described by student of the time Carroll Sudler (the future Cary Harrison). It was intrepid, it was life changing and it was certainly very brave. Prior to the trip, there were orientation sessions, where the adventurers pored over maps and guidebooks and watched films about the places they would visit and shared minutely detailed packing lists. The journeys themselves could be brutal, but one of the most extreme versions of the educational Travel Workshops must have been the 1976 journey across Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

In teacher Francis Stockwell's account, it was, quite simply, *an insidious plot* to get Montana students to *appreciate Montana Food*. The food was certainly a challenge, as stomachs accustomed to Swiss cuisine that was inspired by Italy and prepared in Swiss kitchens met the ferocity of eastern ingredients and an incompatible version of hygiene. The small group was accompanied by Mather, Stockwell and Ursula Kläser who, while working as Head of Administration was also intrinsically involved in school life, accompanying regular trips to the cultural highlights of Zug and Zürich as well as to further flung reaches of the globe. The group of students included Ali-Patrick, related to the then Shah of Iran, and Alamgir Khanji, a prince from an important Pakistani dynasty. Their family connections made the glamour part of a trip that was, in Cary Harrison's words, *equal parts hellfire, glamor (glamour?), and geopolitical insanity*. There were encounters with cobras in Pakistan and with rifle bearing Russian soldiers in the Afghani capital city. There was a bone-rattling journey across the Khyber Pass in a minivan that spent excruciating hours immobilised until broken parts were mended. There was the magnificence of the Tehran mosques and the "privilege" of consuming a delicacy kept for important guests, Kaleh Pache, or lamb broth in which there floated a perfectly intact sheep's brain impaled by a stick of celery.

The learning was visceral:

We set off as idealists, marched through the skeletons of empires, and limped back wiser humans – aware at last that civilization is glorious, humanity hopelessly incorrigible, and our intestines the weakest link in the whole grand experiment.
Cary Harrison

One can not but help but come to the conclusion that the teachers involved in these travels were heroes themselves.



Attending to their vehicle's mechanical breakdown on the Khyber Pass, 1976, photo by John Mather

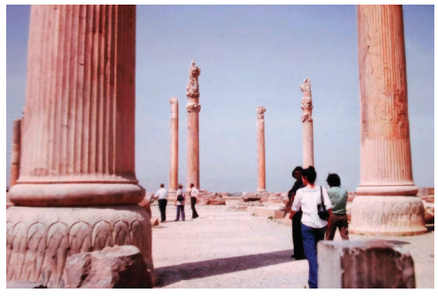


Meeting the Afghan locals, 1976, photo by John Mather



A view of the winding road over the Khyber Pass, 1976, photo by John Mather





The Shah Mosque, Isfahan, and Persepolis, Iran, 1976, photos by Cary Harrison

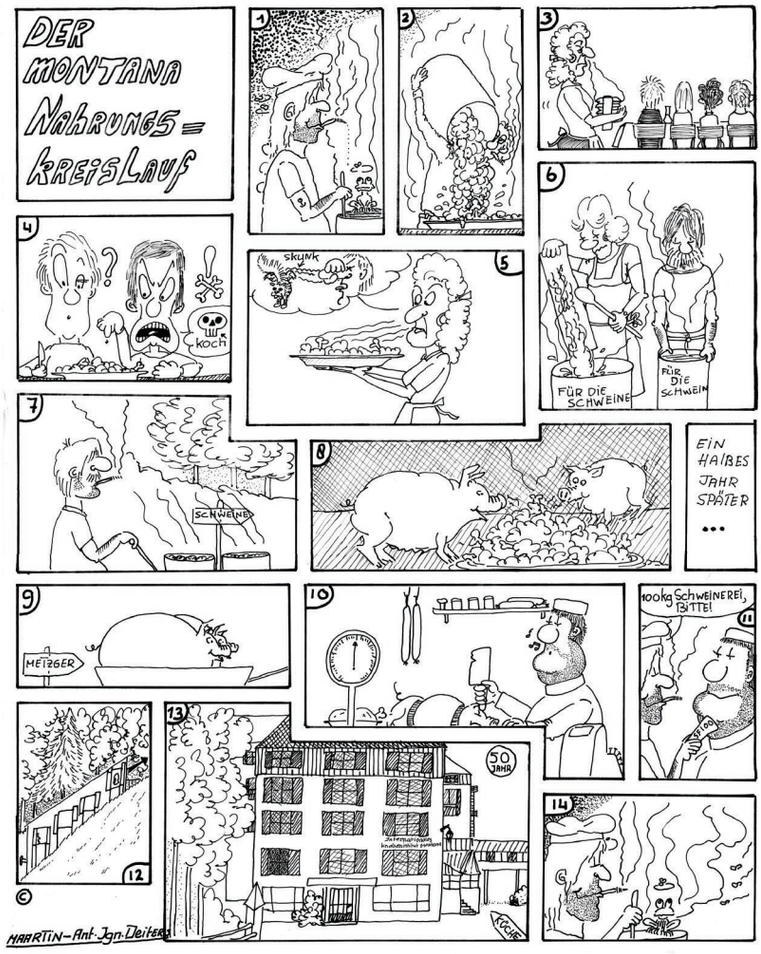
More campus modernisation

In the 1960s, the perpetual task of updating school infrastructure brought improvements to classrooms and the gym and new windows in the dining hall. In 1962, attic space used for storage in Juventus was turned into seven modern, double bedrooms for staff, reflecting the continuing expectation that staff would live on campus. The telephone system was over-hauled with telephone boxes along the dining hall corridor. It was still at dinner time when parents were allowed to make contact with their sons, sending the secretaries from the office to extract the recipient of the call from his place at the table to talk to his family. To make a call home, the boys would have to book an appointment for when they might use the phone in the office. A public telephone booth was installed in the hall of Grosses Haus in 1975. Connections with the outside world were becoming a little easier to maintain.

The ornate west and south terraces of the old Schönfels building (Grosses Haus) had become dilapidated and would have been expensive to repair so they were demolished, letting more light into the classrooms. During the week of the removal in 1966, occupants of Grosses Haus were awoken as work began at 6 am every day. One recalled it felt like an earthquake the house shook so much under the blows of the jackhammers.

During the 1970s, science laboratories were modernised and the Chalet was given a new roof. Modern teaching methods required the acquisition of overhead projectors, a colour television with a video cassette recorder and two photocopiers, rented from Rank Xerox.

The old pig sty was renovated, providing enhanced accommodation with space for 24 pigs. At a time when such practices were the norm, the system provided a thoroughly sustainable destination for food waste from the kitchen and a source of high quality meat for school consumption. Cleaning out the sty also provided a service related disciplinary measure as well as a task that would keep students in touch with a life more bucolic. Ostermayer described their pigs, along with the laundry, as a profitable side-business.



A cartoon from 1976 with a darkly humorous look at the fate of the pigs on campus



Social studies class in Grosses Haus, 1977

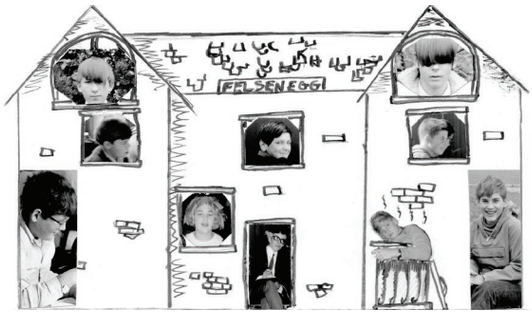
In the mid-1970s, an ambitious project to take school facilities to the next level was hatched. With a local architect, Paul Weber from Zug, plans were drawn up for major (and needed) renovations to Felsenegg that would create state-of-the-art student accommodation. The project expanded to teacher housing (again, the expectation that staff should have homes on campus) and magnificent sports facilities that included a new gym and an indoor swimming pool. The architectural drawings were radical and included demolition of the Trinkhalle.

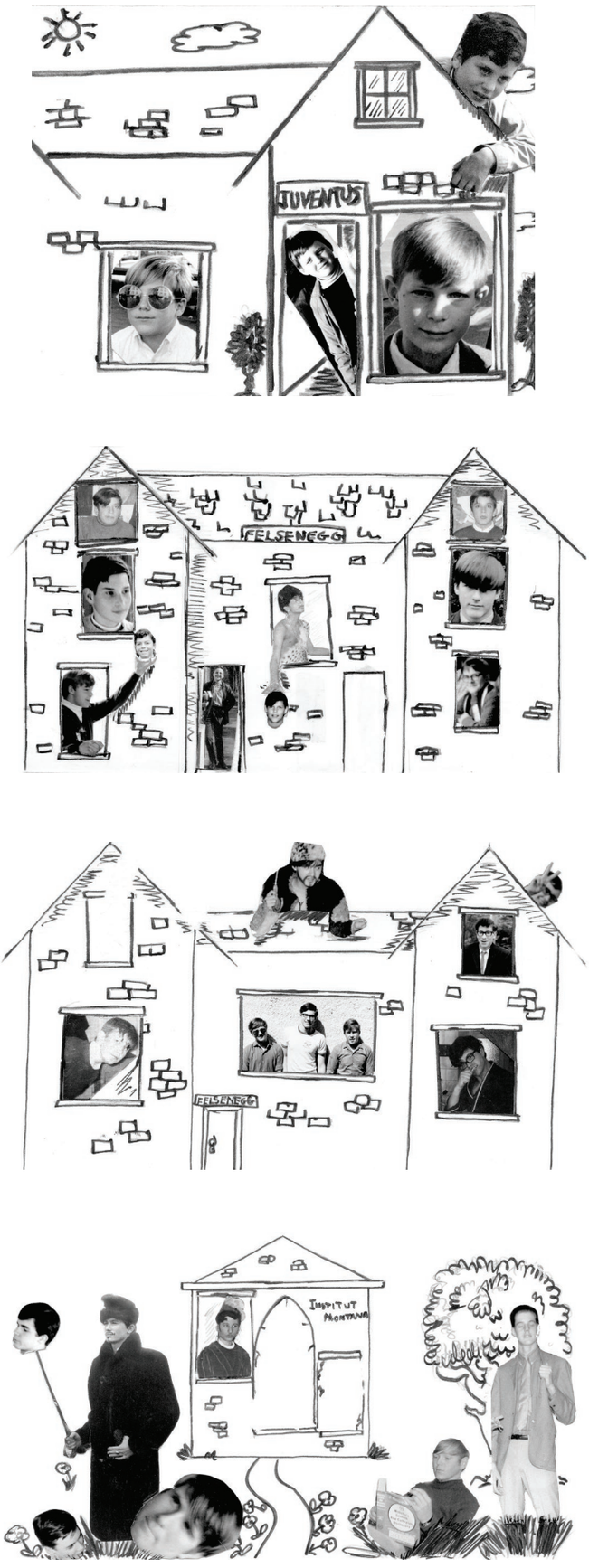
A building fund, Montana 2000, was announced to alumni with requests to donate to fund the development. However, it was not simply the massive costs that derailed the project but the aspirations of the plans. At a time when the conservation of historic buildings and environmental considerations were entering into the contemporary narrative, the first set of plans would need significant changes to meet approval. The only part of the project that was actually built was the house for the director and staff on the avenue to Felsenegg, which was completed in 1978 and is known today as the "Bunker".

In 1979, a new primary school Pavillion provided up-to-date classrooms for the expanding part of the school. At this stage, it delivered just the last two years of primary education for boys aged ten to twelve who boarded at Juventus. There were two teachers, Thomas Baumgartner and Rainer Kaiser, whose guidance on the provision of student-centred teaching contributed to the design of the facilities.

Durch diesen kleinen, aber wichtigen Neubau wurde für die nächsten Jahrzehnte die Grundlage für einen schülergerechten Unterricht geschaffen.
Montanablatt Easter 1979

This small but important new building laid the foundation for student-friendly teaching for the coming decades.





Illustrations with boarders of Juventus, Felsenegg and Grosses Haus, 1969

The times they are a'changing
Bob Dylan 1964

The times were indeed changing around Montana. The school would also change.

"Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis" ("times change and we with time"). It is a reference apt for the period and one that appears in contemporary Montana writing. A young Peter Ostermayer, for example, used the Latin in an insightful essay on Nationalism in 1968.

With hindsight, we can look back on the 1960s turning into the 1970s as a period when an old world, where children were proverbially seen but not heard, and a new world, where young people claimed a voice, were meeting like currents flowing in opposite directions. The Vietnam War protests saw the younger generation supporting a different policy to that taken by the governments of the day and what had started in seats of higher education sent waves that called many assumptions about young people and their place in the world into question. Schools everywhere were navigating paths through choppy waters.

While in many ways Montana stayed splendid in isolation, remote on the Zugerberg from the social and political upheaval in the world beyond, we do read such questioning in Montanablatt articles. It probably echoed down a few corriders, reached the rustle in the leaves of the Zugerberg trees picked up from exchanges between teachers as they walked the "Idiot" circuit (that short stroll through trees and around meadows that allows a breather in the school day). Montana was moving with the times too, although, like most organisations, spasmodically.

Students (and teachers) speaking
The sense that young people were staking a claim to be heard was articulated in an article of 1963 by Max Waibel of the Gymnasium's 6th class. He sees two worlds, that of adults and that of youth. Some adults, he observed, see youth as a mess.

Rare are the adults who stand up for youth. He talks about the division, in the adult world, between the people who have money and those who don't while youth is longing for a world that is good. More humane. And yet, no one hears:

Man fühlt sich merkwürdig, wenn man sich bei Erwachsenen über die Jugend erkundigen möchte. Viel schaut dabei nicht heraus. Entweder sagen sie nicht viel, oder sie verschanzen sich, weil sie misstrauisch sind. Lehrte sie die Erfahrung nicht, was ein offenes Gespräch zu erreichen vermag?

One feels strange when one wants to ask adults about young people. Not much comes of it. Either they don't say much, or they barricade themselves because they are suspicious. Hasn't experience taught them what an open conversation can achieve?
Max Waibel GO6

Young Max Waibel was emblematic of his time - a teenager who was inspired to critique a status quo that he finds to be based on an immorality shaped by money, the gap between rich and poor. He expresses frustration at the adults of his world who refuse to listen. His comments carry the implication that he is not speaking purely at an abstract level, that he has personal experience of these barriers. His piece swings between talking about the big picture of global issues and the quotidien, the opportunity to have a say in decisions about one's immediate environment, which, for a pupil at a boarding school, means your school.



The Swiss Gymnasium Matura class of 1971

We had already seen the name Max Waibel so it jumped from the page of the Montanablatt with his article. The student of the 1960s shared the name with his father. Max Waibel senior was the major in the Swiss intelligence service who, in 1945, was approached by Max Husmann to take up the strenuous task of negotiating with the German armed forces to reach a peace in northern Italy. Husmann and Waibel had become friends as well as colleagues, sharing a respect for each other's intellects as they discussed the progress of the war they were living through. Max junior seems to have shared his father's enquiring mind and zeal for conflict resolution.

Young Max Waibel was not alone in expressing concerns about the right of young people to "have a say". It is an area that the changes of the 1960s and 1970s were bringing to light, especially in schools and colleges, although the idea that students could and even should have a valid contribution to make to school life was in its infancy. While Director Ostermayer worried, in this context, about what he called *Das Problem des modernen antiautoritären Trends (Buch 1946-1971)*, he was also interested in progress. He explored ways constructively to shape the dialogue between authority and youth with innovative, for the time, measures such as putting more emphasis on the role of a class representative and giving class teachers more mentoring tasks. He talked about working on this with Head of the Swiss Section, Dr Eduard (Eddy) Arnold, and, writing in 1971, he listed the project of increasing student co-responsibility among planned initiatives for the coming five years.

Other sections were developing on their own trajectory. An American Section Student Council started in 1965 but, as with many such projects, it is difficult from the sources to trace its evolution so we do not know how long it continued. Records show several Student Council beginnings which suggests that they didn't last - yet. But times were changing. As written in the 1972 Yearbook editorial:

The American Section has been growing for twenty years and has seen major changes in its short life. It is also looking forward to many more changes because the school is realizing the vital importance of keeping up with the present in order to provide a healthy future for its students.
Editorial Yearbook 1972



Student Jan Maarten Boelmans (1971-1978) converted his day planners into outlandishly provocative scrapbooks.



Sledging from Felsenegg to Grosses Haus between classes, 1969



Fun in the snow during a school ski trip, 1976



The Swiss Gymnasium Matura class of 1972

Internationalism and integration in the 1960s and 1970s

School publicity would claim that its students, while formally taught according to their different national programmes, experienced internationalism through clubs and social activities. Talking to former students, however, suggests that the lived reality could be different and the separation between the Italian, Swiss and American sections was becoming more pronounced. Questions around internationalism and integration were explored at the time, indicating that the gaps were noticed and that Montana was achieving what it set out to in terms of raising awareness but perhaps less in the diurnal routine of school life.

In 1966, American Section students were set the task of exploring internationalism and some of their thinking has been preserved in Montanablatt 053. It is quintessential Montana!

There are anecdotes:
The Dutch, for instance, are usually very conservative people. They take a great deal of pride in organizing their rooms and making them look homey. If one walks into a Dutch boy's room, one would normally find him sitting in a comfortable chair smoking his pipe in a gentleman's fashion. The Italians are completely different. They are usually talking about some boy and trying to make a great deal of fun of him. They are also very often trying to find ways to get around working. If you walk into an Italian's room, you will usually see about five or six all dancing to a song. The Americans are very difficult to describe, for they are all different. Usually, however, they are all thinking about sports and athletes. They also take a great deal of pleasure in building models.
Carlos Musso

There are some insightful reflections on the benefits of the Montana environment:
It is readily visible that here at the Institut, most students associate practically all of the time solely with members of their own nation or section and rarely go out of their way to «provoke» international relations. This is entirely understandable, but the mere presence of foreign students around them forces them to be conscious of the habits and mentality of other peoples. The Montana student leaves the Zugerberg knowing that his country's method of doing something is not the only way to do it.
Mark Johnson



Relaxing at Juventus, 1977



Going to the Kiosk for ice cream, 1975

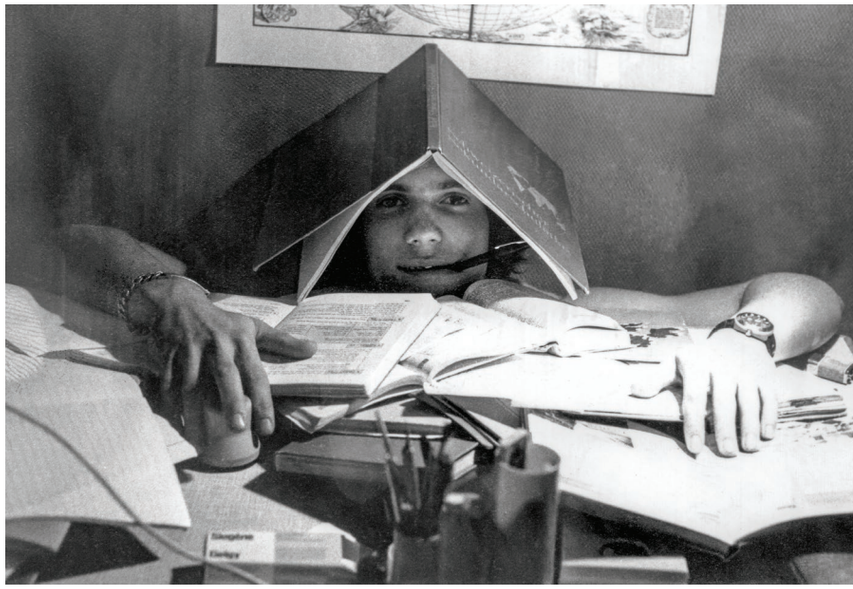

Sledging, 1975

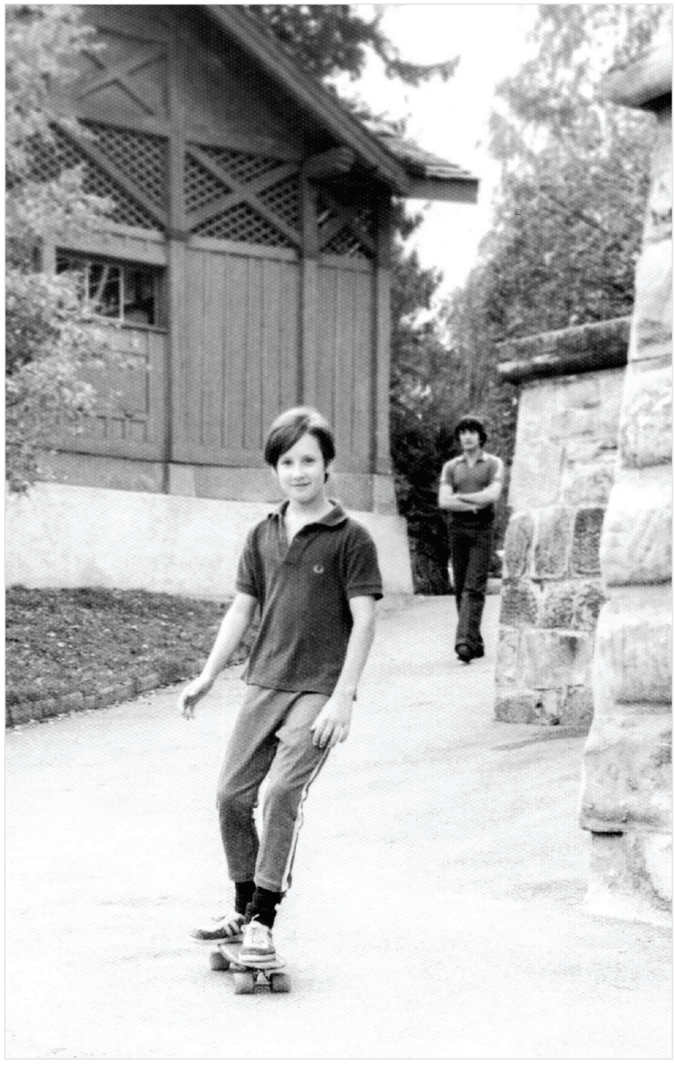
There is a sense of integration:
I have traveled since the age of eleven and have found some advantage in knowing the customs of other peoples and their languages. I wanted to come to an international school to learn what I could about other nationalities. There are students here who have been to almost every corner of the world. Although most of the students at Montana speak English, it is easy to practice another language. There is a mix-up of the customs of all nationalities at the school. European etiquette is preferred by the Americans, and the knowledge of being a cultured person is stressed.
Eugene Davis

There is the understanding that internationalism does not just happen by itself:
This school, which is composed of many different nationalities, must be founded on international cooperation among the students. Now that wasn't meant to be taken as you probably just did. What is meant by this is not a great compromise among many nations here at school, but the simple realization that there are other countries to which someone can be patriotic. To Europeans, this is no great realization, but to an American who has not been brought up with others of a different country, it can be quite a discovery. Americans come from states, some of which are bigger than a European country, and around them there have been only Americans and all of that which they hear is centered on the United States. We at Montana do have an opportunity to learn about other nationalities, even if we don't take that opportunity.
Michael Goodwin

There is evidence of really learning what the school set out to achieve:
Before I came to Europe, I had lived in the quiet seclusion of an ordinary Canadian home. I was completely ignorant of the customs, languages, and ways of living of Europeans. At first the difference hit me like a brick wall, and I was lost and felt alone in these countries of great and old customs. After a while the difference grew smaller and smaller. During my holiday stay at St. Moritz I discovered that the Swiss and German people are very friendly and usually have close family relations. …
The Swiss took New Year's Eve as a gay celebration but also thought about the true meaning of this feast.
Andy Lennox

There is awareness that integration takes effort:
Of course, living in seclusion must produce some type of student relationships, not only within sections, but also between sections. Perhaps the greatest instance of this relationship is in sport, most notably in ski classes, where boys are assigned according to ability.


Caution: Homework avalanche zone, 1979


Skateboards appeared on campus during the 1970s.

Sport competition has always seemed to be a lead for friendship between nationalities. The practice of living together has, quite frequently, built up both a good and a bad inter-section relationship. It is rare that students of one section will visit other students for purely social reasons. Although few students close their doors to other students of other sections, a mild form of segregation is experienced.
Richard Raphael

In 1969, a group of Swiss section students conducted a survey across all the sections under the title *Sind wir international?* They explained:

Wir haben sie gemacht, weil wir das Gefühl hatten, die an unserer Schule einmalige Gelegenheit zu Kontakten über die Grenzen und Kontinente würde zu wenig realisiert.

We conducted it because we felt that the unique opportunity for contact across borders and continents offered at our school was not being sufficiently realized.

Their findings provide insights and some constructive encouragement:

Als Resultat dürfen wir festhalten, dass das Vorurteil, die «anderen» seien an Kontakten nicht interessiert, grundlos ist. Es lage darum an jedem von uns, die Brücke zum Kameraden zu schlagen. Er wartet darauf.

As a result, we can conclude that the prejudice that "others" are not interested in contact is unfounded. It is therefore up to each of us to build a bridge to our classmates. They are waiting for it.

Organisationally, these students inhabited separate nations with borders. They were gentle borders that welcomed traffic but such traffic did not simply happen by virtue of being secluded on a mountain together. The survey conclusions define the issue as one of individual choice. Sometimes, however, it takes an organisational measure, such as the setting up of a "Clan", to help things along. Or it takes a crisis to throw things into the air and the chance for them to land differently. But that comes later.



The Swiss Gymnasium Matura class of 1976



Dancing to live music in the Aula

The 50 year jubilee of 1976

Rather than hold one large event, Ostermayer decided to make the year memorable with several celebrations. It had been, after all, 30 years since the setting up of the Max Husmann Foundation in January 1946.

In April, a series of anniversary alumni meetings kicked off in Düsseldorf. It was followed by more in Italy, the Netherlands and the USA. On 3rd May, there was a festive dinner on the Zugerberg with school leadership, teachers current and past, and the administrative staff from the 1926 to 1946 period. There was the usual reunion for former staff and students on the Whitsun weekend. Then, the official anniversary celebration was held on the weekend of 16/17 October. This account is a summary of the detailed description left for us by Jean Martin Steinmann published in the Montanablatt Christmas 1976, also a former student who worked for many years as Dr Ostermayer's assistant in running the school.

On the Friday, a small gathering at the cemetery in Zug remembered members of the school who were buried there, including Max Husmann. Then, on Saturday morning, the crowds arrived on the Zugerberg to a school decorated for the occasion with displays showing students' work.

After a performance by Francis Stockwell's choir, Dr Ostermayer opened proceedings with a speech that welcomed his guests with words that, like the choir's songs, made use of all the school's languages. More speeches followed from Professor G. Gut, President of the Foundation, Professor Dr E. Montalta, President of the Board, and guest of honour, Federal Councillor Dr Hans Hürlimann. Then, in spite of the cool, foggy weather, everyone gathered along the avenue to Felsenegg for a ceremony. Trees were planted by the leaders of the five sections. Dr Arnold for the Swiss, Monsieur Rosset for the French, Dr Stegeman for the Dutch, Mr Oehrlein for the American and Professor Recla for the Italian.

The afternoon saw a football (soccer) match between former and current students. Films from the pre-war period, dug out of the archives, were shown in the biology room. Games were played, including air-rifle shooting, horoscopes and a tombola. Beer was consumed in the Clan over shared memories. There was an aperitif, a cold buffet in the dining room with decorated tables and dancing until midnight to a live band in the Felseneggsaal.

On Sunday morning there were Catholic and Protestant services, balloons, an aperitif followed by lunch and final farewells over coffee.

On Monday, school resumed as normal with little trace of the festive weekend - just a few lingering decorations and the displays still brought colour to the walls in Grosses Haus.



Film stills from the 50th anniversary celebration, 1976. Super 8 mm film, shot by Alexander Biner.

Life after Montana: Stories from the classes of the 1970s

The Artist: Mike van Audenhove

Mike was a student of the American Section between 1970 and 1975 and edited the Yearbook in his senior year. At school he was known as an academic (his name appeared on the "honors" list several years in a row), as a good athlete and for being slightly crazy. The last attribute was channelled into the lively drawings and cartoons for which he would be remembered.

His parents were from Belgium but living in the United States when Mike was born. They moved to Switzerland in 1966 when he was nine years old. His talent for incisive commentary through the medium of comic drawings already shone and he went from Montana to study Art and Economics at Hamilton College in New York. He was already a celebrated illustrator and comic artist when he returned to Switzerland in 1980. After a series of random jobs (baker, tennis coach, roofer) he became a full-time artist, publisher of several books and especially famous for "Zürich by Mike" in the *Tages-Anzeigers*. He set up home in Ticino where he died suddenly of a stroke in March 2009 at the age of 52.

The Scientist: Willem "Pim" Stemmer

When the quiet young man arrived at Montana in 1969, the Head of the Dutch Section, Jelle Stegeman, took him under his wing. He was known as a well-behaved pupil, always friendly, focused and not interested in being mischievous. He was *"one of the sensible poles in the rather wild environment of Montana in the 70's"*, as a classmate put it. At the same time, his impressive height stood out as did his expertise at table-tennis.

After graduating from the Swiss Section in 1975, Pim studied biology at the University of Amsterdam and went on to earn a PhD in molecular biology from the University of Wisconsin where he continued his post-doctoral research. His work made enormous contributions to the understanding of DNA. He invented and developed "gene shuffling", a directed evolution process with important applications in pharmaceutical and chemical products. He was awarded the Charles Stark Draper Prize in 2011 and was an extraordinary inventor, named on well over 100 issued patents. He was living in California when he died of cancer in April 2013 aged 56. His obituary published in *Nature* magazine in July 2013 described him as *A truly original thinker and pioneering entrepreneur.*

The Humanitarian: Yahya Hassan Bajwa

Our aim is to strengthen religious and cultural tolerance through education and cultural exchange.

A Swiss Section student from 1974 to 1980, Yahya was only 14 years old when he dreamed of the project that would change the lives of so many for the better - especially women and girls back in his native Pakistan. He was living in Felsenegg watched over by Charly Dier and Fraulein Ragazzini, when he wrote on his new electric typewriter:

At the beginning we want just to open a small school. For this purpose we will build first a house, where women will work. Like that they will earn some money. We will pay them their salary and sell the stuff they made in Europe. With the income we will construct later a bigger school and house for orphans. We also will build a hospital and playing grounds.

After earning his doctorate at the University of Zürich, Yahya pursued a varied career in communications and teaching (including teaching Religious Education at Montana 1996 to 1999). While still a student, he had realised that human rights violations needed to be addressed by education and, in 2001, he began the Living Education project. Aided by contributions from Montana friends, he built a boarding school on family land for the poorest orphan children, providing a lifeline and liberation from the religious fundamentalism that offered their only other chance of survival. In 2004, he set up a boarding school for girls. Living Education now runs educational and medical projects around Islamabad and other parts of Pakistan supported by a volunteer network out of Switzerland, improving the lives of many and achieving the humanitarian vision of a young man.



Mike van Audenhove



Willem Stemmer



Yahya Hassan Bajwa



Cartoon by Mike van Audenhove from the 1975 Yearbook

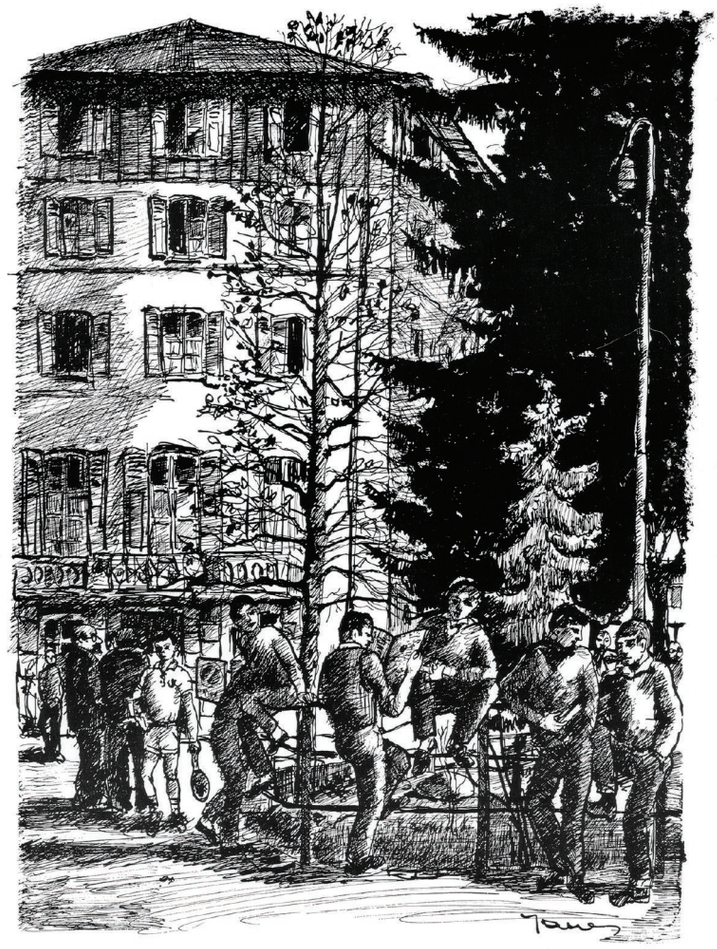
The Spirit of Montana

Montana was indeed the little paradise described by the London journalist in 1929. It was the secluded haven as identified by the departing American Dean in 1964. But it was not closed. Its fences were porous. The school felt the waves of change, the gentle ripples and the crashing breakers, and would be shaped by them.

The second phase of Montana's history was a time of Europe rebuilding itself, of global connections and of curious minds. The waves of countercultural questioning of the 1960s and 1970s would wash over the Zugerberg, sweeping many old conventions away with their force. If you did not go with the flow, you might drown.

Montana's fundamental pillars - that Internationalism that positively encourages Integration, the sense of family that allowed students to develop as Individuals - would prove to be an anchor. With their power, Montana was well prepared to stride ahead into a golden future. It would not, however, be that straightforward. The world can be a harsh place and finance is often the origin of the ordeal. Montana would need all its strengths.

Luckily, there was another significant strength that shines strongly through the Ostermayer years that would play an important role.



Italian Section art teacher Innocente Janes contributed several detailed drawings for use in the Montanablatt. This from 1965 shows students relaxing on the fence after lunch.

In July 1961, the Swiss Section graduating class contributed their thoughts about what each of them would take away in their suitcase as they said good-bye to their school. The responses were varied but there was a theme. They would carry with them, as they left the Zugerberg, a sense of its spirit. A spirit is impossible, as is water, to hold. And yet it can be grasped emotionally, even intellectually, if not between your fingers or carried in your suitcase. As described by student Rudolf Schulze:

Daß geistige, seelische, nationale Hemmungen bei den allermeisten Schülern so rasch und so gründlich aufgelöst werden, bewirkt wohl das, was wir den gesamten Geist der Schule nennen dürfen.

The fact that spiritual, mental and national constrictions are dissolved so quickly and so thoroughly among the vast majority of pupils is probably the result of what we may call the overall spirit of the school.

The spirit is not something that appears in official documentation, it is too nebulous for that, but informal stories of the experience of belonging to the school are full of it. It is about connections that grow from experiences shared between people whatever their place of origin, neither pinned down by geography nor social convention. It is friendships and connections between students and staff. It lights up classrooms and it glows in recollections of sharing time on ski trips, world travels, parties on campus. As Peter Oehrlein later wrote in his reflections:

The camaraderie between teachers, as well as between teachers and students (who were also away from home) was visceral; teachers were parents in absentia, and I still count as dear friends students from those early years of my tenure at Montana.

Soon, that spirit would show just how solid it could be.

The End of a very long era

Josef Ostermayer devoted thirty four years to Institut Montana and that was just his tenure of the post of director. He would stay closely involved in the Board of Trustees and engaged in alumni relations, overseeing the Montana Club that he had set up in 1966, and responsible for the Altmontana section of the Montanablatt until his death in 1998. Despite challenges from outside such as the oil crisis of the 1970s, student numbers were strong and finances carefully managed. With Elisabeth, their shared dedication, thoughtfulness, and absolute fairness built a climate of trust that shaped the school environment. In an organisation of many parts, trust was an essential element to ensuring harmony.

He started to raise the question of a successor in discussion with the Board of Trustees from the beginning of the 1970s. He knew that it was not something that could be done in haste. In fact, for any new Director, following in the footsteps of Dr Ostermayer, whose charisma and whose intellect had overseen Montana for so many years, was going to be a challenge.

In 1978, Ostermayer gave notice to the governing bodies of his intention to retire in the autumn of 1979. He would be 70 years old. He agreed, however, to remain another few months to ensure a diligent handover.

In September 1980, his successor, Dr Karl Storchenegger, took over the role of Director of Institut Montana.

Dr and Mrs Ostermayer, 1975



HUSMANN AFTER MONTANA

In 1946 and 1947, a lot of Husmann's time was focused on dealing with the repercussions of his role in Operation Sunrise. His involvement in the aftermath of the secret operation has been documented with relevant correspondence preserved in various World War II related archives. General Karl Wolff, with whom he had helped negotiate the surrender, was brought to trial, along with other prominent Nazis, at Nuremburg. Husmann went to Nuremburg where Karl Wolff was awaiting trial. He was asked (but also, as he explained in letters, he saw it as his ethical duty) to clarify the circumstances around deals that might have been made with the enemy and to publicise details about Sunrise that Alan Dulles (future Head of the CIA) preferred to keep hidden. He kept up lengthy correspondence with the officials involved in the trials with some important letters posted from the Zugerberg, so we know he spent some time at the school. In 1948, Husmann was an in-person witness at a little publicised trial of Karl Wolff in Hamburg. It ended up with a remarkably lenient sentence, in spite of evidence for war crimes, due to his service helping to bring about surrender in Italy.

In 1949, Swiss authorities were still collecting information on the activities of the Sunrise group, including Husmann. This continued after he had moved to Rome where they discovered his address in 1953. Such surveillance should be seen in the context of the spectacular amount of spying on their own citizens in which Swiss authorities were engaged at the time (as was made public in the 1990s). For more regarding Husmann and Sunrise, and exploration of its complex ethical and political tangle, see *Ending the War*.

In his history of the school (1976), Ostermayer talks about an on-going exchange with the founder of the school during his early years on the Zugerberg, but that this diminished as the years went on. Diplomatically, Husmann allowed the new director to make his own mark on the school. However, Husmann remained as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Montana for the rest of his life, attending meetings on the Zugerberg and in Zürich even after he had become established in Rome. There are whispers also of a home in Monte Carlo. He was not keeping still.



For his 70th birthday in March 1958, Husmann organised a memorable party in Rome. Josef and Elisabeth Ostermayer were invited and it is from Ostermayer that we have a few details. There was a service at the Vatican in the chapel of the Swiss Guard, a cocktail with former students, and what must have been a magnificent dinner. It was held in the panoramic restaurant of the Hotel Hassler with its breathtaking view over the Eternal City. Dr Teobaldi was present, as was the Swiss ambassador in Rome and many of Husmann's local friends.

Other stories waft around Husmann's life in Rome, that he moved in glamorous circles in the flourishing Italian film industry of the time. More prosaically, he became a member of the Board for the Swiss School in Rome. He seems to have maintained his connections with the Catholic Church, interested in its worldwide educational infrastructure with its potential to contribute towards world peace. In a similar vein, it is suggested that, towards the end of his life, he became involved in the movement to further the cause of a "Weltsprache", a common living language through which the people of the world could communicate fruitfully together. But all these are whispers, part of the mix of myths for which sources are not verifiable.

From 1963, Husmann's health started to deteriorate with debilitating circulation problems. He died in a clinic in Rome on 19th February 1965. In accordance with his wishes, he would return one last time to Switzerland. A funeral was held at Zürich crematorium at 17h on the 25th of February. His ashes were laid in Zug with a blessing performed by Dr Alfred Teobaldi.

Notices of the death of Max Husmann appeared in the Zürich newspapers. There was one from Institut Montana. There were two from Institut Minerva. They suggest that Husmann maintained a more consistent involvement with Minerva than previously assumed. One from the board and direction celebrated Husmann's years working for the education and development of young people. The other from Minerva teaching staff spoke of a long illness borne with patience and their appreciation for 47 years of understanding and kindness. Institut Minerva would close for the day on the date of the funeral.

Another notice is more personal. It is from Beatrice Husmann-Dart. She gave Husmann's two addresses as one in Rome and the Sonneggstrasse home that he had acquired so long ago. She calls him "my dear husband" and speaks on behalf of the family for whom he was a brother-in-law and uncle.

After a fully lived life, which he dedicated to the upbringing and education of the youth entrusted to him, he was taken from his family and friends in his beloved Rome at the age of 77.

That Max and Beatrice were not so estranged during these years is also evident in a letter from Beatrice to Paul Bernays sent in the summer of 1965. The ETH archives have a dossier of correspondence connected with the highly esteemed Swiss mathematician who had been Husmann's doctoral supervisor. Both Max and Beatrice had remained in contact with him over the years. He must have written to Beatrice to sympathise after Husmann's death and her reply is touching. She wrote that, since his death, she had thrown herself into her work giving singing lessons and organising a concert with her students - work was a comfort - but now she had come to Locarno to recover emotionally from the sad events of recent months. Bernays must have mused on times gone by, when they had all spent time together at Husmann's school, as she replies:

Das waren noch Zeiten auf dem Zugerberg, - und wie jung war man noch damals. Das Leben ist inzwischen vergangen, und der arme Max, hat er ein sehr trauriges Ende gehabt. Er ist an einer Gehirn-Sklerose gestorben, der ein Herz-Infarkt voranging. Er hatte keinerlei Schmerzen, und wusste nichts mehr, aber für mich, die ich bis zum Ende bei ihm war, war es furchtbar mitanzusehen, was aus diesem energischen, gescheiten Menschen geworden ist.

Those were the days on the Zugerberg, and how young we all were back then. Life has passed since then, and poor Max had a very sad end. He died of cerebral sclerosis, preceded by a heart attack. He felt no pain and remembered nothing, but for me, who was with him until the very end, it was terrible to see what had become of this energetic, intelligent man.

Another notice in the Zürich press at the end of December 1965 tells us about the establishment of the foundation that was Husmann's legacy, the Dr Max Husmann-Stiftung. Its purpose was to enable or facilitate the studies of gifted and deserving young people. Its governing body consisted of three members. They were Dr Viktor Hauri, resident of Zürich; Beatrix Husmann of Malters and Zürich and resident of Zürich; and Dr Max Waibel, resident of Lucerne. The notice said that Max Husmann had died a resident of Monte Carlo. It is the only evidence in writing about Max Husmann's connection with Monaco, but the notice does contain some inaccuracies (the spelling of Beatrice, giving the title "Dr" to military man Max Waibel), so we leave it as another of those little mysteries.

After years of keeping Operation Sunrise in the shadows, Switzerland eventually allowed its story to enter public discourse. On its 60th anniversary in 2005, President Samuel Schmid formally recognised the Operation in a speech made on the shores of Lake Maggiore. His words officially approved the role played by Max Waibel and recast his reputation as heroic as well as recognising the important part played by Max Husmann.

This did not prevent the ghosts of war time pursuing Husmann even beyond the grave. An article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung Geschichte* in March 2020 made claims about Husmann the fascist which it backed up with some dizzying (and inaccurate) speculation. Stories about black shirt parades by Italians at Montana were reimagined as confirmation of Husmann's fascism and support for Mussolini, claiming that it was Husmann who organised a fascist group at his school and ordered the wearing of black shirts.

The claims run counter to accounts we have from several other sources about Montana in the 1940s. Somehow they also seem to miss the point that Montana was providing a safe haven for victims of antisemitism. The story goes further but we shall leave it within the pages of the magazine, just sad that there will have been readers who believed it to be true.

He did not write about himself, but there are words from people who knew Max Husmann to leave us with glimmers of a vibrant personality lighting up the past. It is mirrored in frames from cine films that capture sunshine in a smile and a sense of playfulness. There is something about his sister, the affectionate Frau Gutstein, and references to her connections with her brother to suggest that it was a warmth that they shared.

We know that he valued intelligence:
With one hand resting on the side of the card table, Max Husmann stood before me, his brilliant blue eyes seeking my attention. " I will build the new school here," he said. "It shall be the kind of school where all nations meet, a hard-working place and a house of friendship, an academic bridge over this sea of conflict and a far cry from the swamp of stupidity."
Salomon David Steinberg 1951

His intelligence was put to use, careful thinking structured by strong ethics:
My friend Dr Husmann was neither soldier nor politician but rather a schoolmaster and mathematician; however, he followed world affairs with a passionate interest and, was able to predict events that public opinion had not yet imagined…. It was just because he was not a soldier that he felt it was in his moral obligation to place his knowledge and connections unreservedly at the disposal of his country, and in this way fulfil his duty during the war.
Max Waibel

The elitist outlook that was typical of his generation was accompanied by a will to share, to do good. We have seen that he was generous to Malters. The intention to provide opportunities for those who might otherwise miss out on the gift of education was part of the Minerva project and it was part of his legacy:

Excessive in his generosity, original in his creations and extremely adept in all his abilities, Dr. Max Husmann's death is a great loss to the world of educational planning. This great man is assured of the respect of the students of the lnstitut Montana, and his service to education will continue to be remembered in our American School by his most generous scholarships.
Montana Yearbook 1965

As has just been announced, Dr. Max Husmann, founder of the Institut Montana on the Zugerberg and long-time director of the Institut Minerva in Zurich, who died in 1965, left an amount of over four million francs to a Dr. Max Husmann Foundation based in Zürich. The foundation's purpose is to enable or facilitate the study of highly gifted and deserving young people. It is supervised by the Federal Department of Home Affairs.
NZZ February 23 1970

Max Husmann socialised with aristocrats and members of the wealthy class of his time, many of whose backstories might not have been pristine. At the same time, there is enough evidence for us to know that his driving hope was to educate the world away from friction and fighting, prejudice and persecution, away from the brutality of war. He wanted peace and, we can see in his smile, happiness. In his book, Josef Ostermayer quoted the last words spoken to him by Max Husmann, already breathless with the lung condition that would kill him a few weeks later. It was January 1965:

Die Welt wäre so einfach, wenn die Menschen ehrlich und anständig wären. Aber die Menschen schaffen Komplikationen, weil sie einander nicht trauen. Sie müssen sich kennenlernen, dann wird alles gut. Und wir müssen dafür arbeiten.

The world would be so simple if people were honest and decent. But people create complications because they don't trust each other. They need to get to know each other, then everything will be alright. And we must work towards that.

And Beatrice?

She seems to have continued her life in Zürich giving singing lessons while serving on the board of the Dr. Max Husmann Foundation. She died in 1992 when she would have been almost 95 years old. The foundation announced her death with a notice:

The dear deceased was a co-founder and long-time board member of our foundation. She has given us, as well as our scholarship holders, an infinite amount through her understanding and her warm heart, for which we thank her. She will remain unforgettable for us.
Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 13th February 1992



An artwork from 1966 by Innocente Janes showing students arriving on campus and making their way up to Grosses Haus with a handcart to carry the luggage.

PART FOUR
MOVING MOUNTAINS
1980 *to* 2000



Aerial photo, 1978
Image source: ETH Library Zurich, Image Archive / LBS_L1-782671

“EINE REIHE DURCHAUS SYMPATHISCHER ANACHRONISMEN”

An array of charming anachronisms

The 1980s flow into the 1990s

In 1984, two relatively newly appointed teachers were, as was customary, interviewed for the school magazine. Both would go on to play significant roles in this next chapter and in Montana’s development. In response to student questions, each offered an insightful comment about where the school was at, here and now.

Werner Edelmann was a Swiss Section biology and chemistry teacher with an impressive intellect that he used to develop important insights in and potential solutions to environmental problems, continuing his research and work in this area while teaching. When asked what was special about the school, he observed how the international and friendly atmosphere differentiated Montana from other schools. The boys who were interviewing, attending a school that was nominally still for boys, asked about his views on all-boys’ schools. His response captures a Montana anomaly that, soon, would change:

Ich finde es prima, solange es auch «Knaben» mit Röcken und Zöpfen hat - wie dies auf dem Zugerberg der Fall ist ...

I think it’s great, as long as there are also “boys” with skirts and braids – as is the case on the Zugerberg...

When Aldo Haesler, then a new sociology and economics teacher in the Swiss Section, was asked describe Montana, he called it an array of appealing anachronisms. His observation echoes across stories in the Montanablatt of those decades and the memories of former students. The school as an organisation was taking on the sense of history that its historic buildings communicated and was, like those buildings, perhaps in need of some renovation here and there. And yet those creaky quirks had their charm, they pulled at your heart strings. The school had its spirit.

There were, indeed, a few layers of anachronisms adding texture to Montana life by the early 1980s. There was also, thankfully, the Spirit of Montana.



The westward-facing view from the Chalet balcony made using three successive photos and 4 x 6-inch prints, 1980

New director, new family

Karl Storchenegger took up his post in September 1980. He grew up in Zürich and Luzern and his subjects at the Universities of Zürich and Lausanne covered romance languages and English. He continued his studies in France, England and the United States, earned his teaching qualification in 1967, and became a French and English teacher at the Cantonal school in Zug in 1968. He gained a doctorate in 1972. He went on to hold posts on several committees, acting as president of the Cantonal teacher organisation and of the pension fund. He was busy out of school as well, a member of the church choir in Oberwil, Master of the Fisherman Guild of Zug and artillery commander in the "Grenzbrigade" (home guard).

In 1965 he married Ursula Bischofsberger. He followed the precedent set by Herr Ostermayer, seeing the Montana directorship as a whole family commitment, and moved to the home on campus. In 1980, there were three children, Eva-Maria (14), Patrick (13) and Stefan (10). They all changed school to become pupils at Montana. The Storcheneggers' fourth child, Damian, was born in the family's first year on the Zugerberg.

The new director is set to work!

One of Storchenegger's earliest tasks was to face questions from Montanablatt reporters. The interview was conducted by Florian Busse and Christoph Schreib from G7 (the Swiss Section Matura class) and their questions throw light on contemporary concerns and some of those anachronisms. Several of the questions, on boarding life and on school rules, indicate that the students believe that changes are due. For example:

Sind Sie - auch nach eingehendem Studium der Hausordnung - zu der Ansicht gekommen, dass das Reglement teilweise veraltet ist?

Are you, after studying the school rules, of the view that the regulations are a little outdated?

And:

Halten Sie die Einrichtung einer Schülermitverwaltung auf Montana für sinnvoll und auch fur durchführbar?

Do you think that establishing a student council at Montana is sensible and feasible?

The new director, quite reasonably, answers that he needs some time at the school before he can fully answer such questions.

Of course, it is a given that school students over many generations push for more freedom than the rules of the day prescribe. And yet, these questions, gently and respectfully expressed, do suggest that, although Montana had progressed with the times during the fast-moving 1960s and 1970s, there were a few dusty old conventions lurking in some corners. Stability can encourage the dust to settle. But this was a new beginning. Where would it go?





Above: The Storchenegger family, 1986
Left: Dr Karl Storchenegger in the director's office, 1987

Who are we now?

A new school brochure would appear later but a summary was published in 1982 to provide information about Montana. Reflecting Werner Edelmann's comment, it defines the school as for boys, continuing Ostermayer's practice of advertising a boys' school despite the handful of girls who attended. It explains its international perspective, describing how students are taught different national curricula but that they reap the benefits of an international atmosphere *with all its challenges and adventures*. It positions the Swiss Section, teaching in German towards the Swiss Matura, as *the heart of the organisation.* Next to the Swiss, it explains, is an Italian Section following recognised Italian programmes, and what it calls a *well-developed* American Section and a *well-known* Dutch Section. It specifies that the sections operate independently, with their own curricula and native teachers. Across the school, classes are small and language learning strong. Students associate with their peers from other countries in their lives as boarders, through their extracurricular clubs, activities and sports. There are, it says, around 210 boarders and 50 day students.

A brochure for the The American School of Institut Montana Zugerberg was also published around 1980, with Karl Storchenegger named as Director. It describes the Institut as having American, Dutch, French Swiss, German Swiss and Italian Divisions.

Each School has its own Dean, working directly under the guidance of the Director of the Institut.... Although the students pursue individualized studies, they nevertheless live in close contact and harmony with one another.

Much of the brochure is taken directly from that published in 1951, adjusted for specifics. The curriculum description has been updated for the 1980 version, but a remarkable amount of information is repeated verbatim from the much earlier publication.

Sections in the 1980s

In 1980, Rektor of the Swiss Section was Dr Eduard Arnold who had arrived at the school teaching classics in 1949. He went on to lead the section from 1953 until 1982 when he retired and the role went to Dr Max Bauer, German and history teacher who had been at the school since 1974. Max Bauer left in 1992 to take up a role in education department of Canton Zug.



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Prospekte und Beratung durch den Direktor, Dr. J. Ostermayer:

Postadresse:
Institut Montana, 6316 Zugerberg, **Telefon 042 / 21 17 22**

Advertisement, 1980. In this illustration of the campus, Felsenegg is amusingly located just beside the Chalet.



Grosses Haus, 1982

Dutch and French groups had their long-standing leaders, Jelle Stegeman and Aloys Rosset. With the 1982 retirement of Aloys Rosset, who had taught at the school since 1947, another era ended. He was succeeded by Daniel Fridez, who continued to promote French language and literature and maintain this polyglot side to the school's identity.

In the Italian Section a new leader, Carlo Comucci, arrived in 1981 on a three year appointment replacing the previous Preside Ortolani Oddone. On starting his role at Montana, he thought that three years would be plenty but he ended up deeply committed to the school and managed to arrange to stay. While many of the Italian teachers continued serving for their short-term government appointments, there were some who were staying longer. Ursula Schnabel was bilingual German and Italian and taught the Italian students German from 1966 until well into the 1990s. Maurizio Anghinolfi was another Italian teacher who would stay for many years at Montana.

During the 1980s, Peter Oehrlein was still at the helm of an American Section that was evolving, continuing along the trajectory of becoming less specifically American and more multinational. The global market for international education was no longer principally about Americans posted abroad seeking places at American universities. Now, families all over the world, whether working for multi-national organisations or ambitious to broaden opportunities for their children's future, were looking at international schools. Peter Oerhlein travelled the world selling the advantages of a Montana education and the section grew. In spite of the continuing number of young teachers who arrived on short-term contracts, staff retention in the section was starting to go up. Peter Oehrlein finally returned to the United States in 1991. Kevin O'Brien became Academic Dean of the section, another of the long serving members of staff who was able to harmonise progress and stability. He was also known as a phenomenal history teacher.



Students Sik Hong Chan and Mansour al Zamil, 1980



How fast could you solve a Rubik's Cube in 1982?



Students visiting the Mostar Bridge, former Yuogslavia, 1981

But... The times are, indeed, changing

The world was becoming more connected and not simply through travel. Internationalism, and so international education, how it is thought about and how practised, was evolving. Another change was separation, or not, of the sexes. Separation of girls and boys, especially in an educational context, was becoming the exception rather than the norm. While the changes these developments wrought on the Montana model happened, in part, gradually, the 1980s saw some steps forward that could be counted as leaps.

The International Baccalaureate

By the 1980s, the original practice of forming formal multi-cultural groups of students outside of the nationally based academic sections had long since faded but the sections were becoming more international within themselves. The trend had been noticeable for some years in the American Section, but, since the federally recognised Swiss Matura was awarded from 1976, the Swiss Section was also becoming more diverse, attracting students from overseas who aimed at specifically Swiss universities. However, it would be Montana's American Section that would develop from a small but lively grouping into the International School.

The High School Diploma programme could be quite bespoke. The curriculum section in that 1980 brochure explains how the ideas of European and American education were combined into a demanding programme that would prepare students for advanced placement in colleges of their choice. There was room for specialisation for gifted students, such as a full year's course in algebra and the opportunity to study advanced science in the senior years. Rapid progress was assured by Montana language learning methods and by extensive reading of history and English literature.

However, the relevance of a diploma so targeted towards America was changing. Increasing numbers of schools were teaching the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme and there were already 300 IB schools across the world spread out over 50 countries. Seven of them were in French speaking Switzerland, where the first meetings of international educators took place in the 1950s to develop an international curriculum that would lead to an internationally recognised school leaving certificate.

It was the leader of the Dutch Section, Dr Jelle Stegeman, who first became interested in the IB Diploma recognising its compatibility with Montana's educational mission. His persistence to introduce the IB programme at Montana turned out to be crucial for Montana's future healthy development. Not only did the IB offer a global passport to universities around the world but the pedagogical reasons were also strong. In developing the curriculum, the educators behind the IB aimed to create a programme that embraced and honoured cultural diversity rather than transmitting



Jelle Stegemann



Classroom scenes, 1985 (above) and 1987 (below)





a nationally oriented narrative. While its courses with their global perspective were taught predominantly in English, the programme kept the space for the study of the languages and literature of many countries. Its split between studies of subjects at higher and standard levels matched Montana's commitment to individual rates of learning and to nurturing individual talents. Stegeman began to promote the idea in the school.

Reactions were not positive. There was no support from the director or most of the rest of the school for the idea. But American Section teacher Kevin O'Brien was soon convinced and joined Stegeman to carry out research that demonstrated how the the IB would support Montana's core values. Dean Peter Oehrlein then saw the advantages and the programme was offered in the American Section from 1987 making Montana the first school in German speaking Switzerland to become an IB school.

Montana day students - and girls

There was no overnight transformation from an institution only for boys to co-educational. The gradual shift towards co-education aligned with an increase in day students in the 1980s, even while the school maintained an identity, and advertised itself, as a Knabeninstitut. With more international companies setting up offices in the Canton of Zug, the internationally minded business people they employed were interested in a school like Montana for their daughters as well as their sons.

A rich source for information on life in the 1980s at Montana is a beautifully written memoir by one of those girls, Pia Kiviaho-Kallio from Finland. She became a Montana student in 1984 while the family lived in Zug due to her father's work relocation. Her book has a focus on the American Section where she studied but it offers a glimpse into the Montana world of the time. It is full of colour and life from the perspective of a student who was curious about everything around her and who recorded her real-time experiences in her journal. In 1984, Pia was one of 11 girls, all day students, in a school of around 300 boys.



In 1981, a Zug public television production crew arrived on campus and interviewed the director and many students, including Myriam Rosset, then one of only a few female students at Montana.



Playing the blues for the camera and the viewers of Zug public television

Pia from Finland came to love her time on the Zugerberg. She had fun, she made friends from around the world, and was awestruck by the quality of the teaching. At the end she was sad to leave. Commenting on how the approach to studying was less rigid than at her previous schools, how it encouraged more independence and how it was more interesting, she wrote:

Montana seems to have a built in mechanism for making the student go beyond her limits.

Montana was not yet set up to accommodate girls as boarders. For a short while at the end of the 1980s, families who requested boarding places for their girls could make use of a convent in Zug that provided accommodation and had a public transport link with the Zugerberg. This was a less than satisfactory solution. In 1991, in response to growing demand, part of Juventus was redesigned as a Mädchenhaus with 30 beds and new bathrooms and showers. They had their own house mother, Frau Osler, and a common room under the roof which included modern TVs and video recorders. At the end of 1993, an area for seven older girls was created on the upper floor.

An interview with some of the first Juventus girls offers insights on their experience. They are happy to be part of the school and they like the division of the school day - morning lessons, afternoon sports/free time, evening studium. There are concerns about the lack of more girl-oriented activities and they find issue with some of the rules such as lights off (Aufsicht) times and overly restrictive regulations on leaving campus. When you are restricted, they point out, is when mischief is likely to be made. They are treated, by some teachers, like little kids with no independence. The boys conducting the interview say they can associate.

The views of the boys? They like the new ideas that the presence of girls is bringing to the school, the mood is more relaxed. And the teachers who are questioned believe that the girls' presence is entirely positive, they enrich the community.

Very soon, the girls were contributing hugely to school life, acting in plays, joining the parties, singing in the choir. The overriding issue would be the new dynamics of in-school social life. While developments were agreed to be entirely positive they came with some challenges for Aufsicht teachers who had to ensure everyone was in the right part of the building after lights out.



The memoir "A Voice From The Berg" by Pia Kiviaho



Pia and other girls running to the Seilbahn after school, 1984



Eva-Maria Storchenegger and classmates, 1987



Achtung, fertig, los! Starting a sprint at Sports Day in 1986

The Montana Girls

Montana was, for many years, specifically a boys' school with a sprinkling of girls. In the 1930s, they are mostly fleeting names on insubstantial records with back stories that remain out of reach. The first girl after WWII was Herr Director Ostermayer's oldest child, a daughter. Verena Ostermayer became a Montana student in 1948. Unlike her predecessors, she would spend most of her school life as a Montana student.



Verena Ostermayer, 1947–1959

The next girl after Verena was, as far as we could find in the records, Sandra Aulabaugh. Known as Sandy, she joined the American Section senior class in the school year 1960-1961 while her family from near Chicago was living in Zug. Her younger brother Norman was already at Montana as a weekly boarder. She appears in Montana's 2nd Yearbook when it was the convention for a resumé of each senior to appear with their photo. She was heralded as the *mascot of the senior class* who handled *a lot of guff from her uncouth cohorts* with a smile, and was s*uccessful not only as a friend but also as a scholar*.



Sandra Aulabaugh, 1960–1961

Many of those early girls had a connection with the school via a parent or a brother. Next came daughter of French teacher Aloys Rosset, Myriam. When she became a Montana student in 1975, she was a lone girl in an ocean of boys until the arrival of an Italian, Benedetta Tagliabue, in 1977. The absence of toilet facilities for girls meant that they had to use the "ladies' room" in the Seilbahn station. An interview with Myriam and Benedetta in 1978 about their experiences describes boys who were used to being in male company and whose behaviour around their female classmates was, at best, awkward.



Myriam Rosset, 1975–1982

By the beginning of the 1980s there was a handful of girls across the sections including daughter of the director, Eva-Maria. All day students with homes nearby, most were in the Swiss Section (eight in school year 1982 to 1983). There were two British sisters, Kirsten and Marcella Le Corre, in the American Section, then joined in 1984 by Pia from Finland and a young American called Michelle. In Pia's words, these pioneers found *an environment which had been shaped into a male norm* where *it was not easy for the first girls to define their place in the system*.



Dorothea Wehlen, 1978–1987

The school year 1984 to 1985 saw more female arrivals and, with them, a more relaxed ambiance regarding their presence. Dorothea Wehlen, who had arrived in 1978 to join Myriam and Benedetta, could remark in 1985 that the experience could still be a lonely one. It was better if there was another girl in your class. But now some of the boys were finding it easier to behave naturally around girls:

Ich gebe zu, dass es auch Montanaschüler gibt, die sich ohne «Charakterstorung» in der Nahe eines Mädchens aufhalten können. Es ware schön, wenn es bei allen so sein könnte. I admit that there are also Montana boys who can be around a girl without a "character disorder". It would be nice if that were the case for everyone.



Eva-Maria Storchenegger, 1980–1986

By 1987 there were around 50 girls at Montana, some with accommodation at the teachers' college in Cham. Run by nuns, it was a different sort of life but it had a good public transport connection to Montana. Soon we shall see girls becoming fully-fledged Montana boarders and much will change, for, many agreed when it happened, the better.



Caroline Petit, 1981–1983


Francesca Müller,
1981–1984


Barbara Eglin,
1982–1985


Iréne Christensen,
1982–1989


Anja Röschman,
1983–1987


Luma Kubba,
1983–1985


Kirsten Le Corre,
1983–1985


Marcella Le Corre,
1983–1987


Beatrice Eglin,
1983–1987


Christine Stuldreher,
1983–1985


Shinny van Sluis,
1983–1988


Eleonore Wilde,
1983–1986


Susanne Christensen,
1984–1986


Pia Kiviaho,
1984–1985


Marie-France Tschudin,
1984–1989


Michelle Piras,
1984–1986


Marianne Müller,
1984–1985


Nicole Funke,
1984–1988


Alka Agarwalla,
1984–1985


Puspa Agarwalla,
1984–1987


Julie Hartmann,
1984–1989


Kirsten Fischer,
1984–1987


Katja Schirmacher,
1984–1986

Not pictured: Ursula Berliner, 1935,
Gisela Beutner 1937, Mary Sue Wilson 1937,
Anne de Jonge 1938–1939, Benedetta Tagliabue 1977–1979,
Adriana Allemanno 1980–1983, Gabriela Spiller 1982–1983,
Daniela Greco 1983–1987, Elena Logli 1983–1987,
Sandra Ugoletti 1983–1988, Rosa Giacobino 1984–1987,
Beate Röhrig 1984–1988.

Life at school

The 1980s. What music now wafts through open windows of Chalet, down the corridors of Grosses Haus? It probably echoed some of the concerts students travelled to Zürich to take in. Boy George in November 1987, UB40 in May 1991, for example. And, in charge of the volume as in charge of many aspects of their lives, is John Mather. He became Head of Grosses Haus in 1980 and then took what was a new role at Montana, Head of Boarding and Student Life, in 1991. The timing was exemplary, just as the added dimension of boarding for boys and girls entered into the situation.

At the same time, school life was evolving from the formal expectations of previous generations to the more relaxed conventions of the later 20th century. John Mather's style, with its artful balance between friendship and authority, was adept at responding to the developments, helping already to make Montana a place to grow. Bonds were created that would last beyond school and former students remember the weekend gatherings at Mr Mather's rooms for tea and cakes or popcorn, to watch TV, read books and magazines. At the same time, the eagle-eyed teacher would spot whose lights were on when they should not have been, or who might be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and follow it up with appropriate retribution.

TOASTER INCIDENT
This past Saturday night Hakan and Bo Bo got the idea in their heads to have some toast after lights out. Hakan had borrowed Mr. Johnson's toaster for the event. There they were eating their toast and cheese when Hakan heard what he thought was someone's alarm going off. Hakan then realized that it might be a fire alarm, he checked outside his door and saw that the red light was flashing. Hakan went back inside and closed the door. Hakan and Bo Bo heard the echoing footsteps of the teachers' progression down the halls to find the culprits. Now the shit really hit the fan. Big M. broke down their door. BUSTED. Mather grabbed the toaster by the cord and like a bird it flew right out that window. And all Mr. Johnson could do about the toaster was give it a decent burial.
Yearbook 1990

Teachers too appreciated the connections forged in campus life. It was not only the American and Italian Section teachers who were living on campus, it was often a transitional phase for teachers who came to Montana from other countries who would turn into long-term members of staff. Kurt Späte, for instance, came from Germany in 1985 first to teach PE across the sections and he, like others, enjoyed the sense of camaraderie that developed among teachers and students sharing the campus and understanding each other beyond the realms of academics. He fondly remembered winter evenings and the clack clack of practising ice hockey as a dark evening closed around the school. Even after he set up home in Zug, the connections remained strong.


Students with a surprise for housefather Thomas Baumgartner, 1980


Campus with spring colours, 1982


A cosy boarding room with boom box and a chess board at the ready, 1982


Movie watching time in boarding with teacher David Pekari, 1984

Sports

Sports continued but, as befits the era, were moving beyond the traditional games that had been available for the early Montaners. Charles Dier had been Head of Sports since those far-off days, having joined the school in 1941. On a cold winter morning in February 1984, he suffered a heart attack and was found dead in the teachers' room by his colleagues Jörg Breuer and Thomas Litz. His booming voice and the awarding of a genuine Bernese cow bell at the Orientierungslauf prize-giving would go down in Montana history.

Rolf Schönenberger took over from Herr Dier as Head of Sports, ably assisted by other teachers across a range of sports that included volleyball, tennis and table tennis, field hockey and ice hockey. Mark Johnson is coaching a basketball team and Kurt Späte is coaching a team of soccer players. Although the warmer winters were becoming less favourable to skiing on the Zugerberg, 1993 was a good year and the natural ice rink was in use from Christmas to March. Other options were becoming available - squash at the sports centre in Aegeri, crossbow shooting, climbing and river rafting experiences. For swimming there was the pool in Baar. Much anticipated ski weekends and weeks to the mountains continue, now very section based, and the scene of many more adventures than purely skiing. In 1988, the initiative of two students, Georgios Tsoukalos and Robert Müller, resulted in the installation of a Fitness Room for strength training. A state-of-the-art multi-seat training station upped the game in 1995 - the gift of the Reppel family who had students at the school.

An exciting innovation in 1995! The popularity of inline skating among students of all sections leads to another student-led initiative - the Half Pipe Club. Its aim, as described by Robert Schöffel, Swiss Section GO2 and Roy Raanani, American Section Grade 8, is not who is the best or who does the most spectacular jumps. It is all about encouraging people, boys and girls (who participate outstandingly), to have fun.











In action on Sports Day, 1985 – 1989

The annual Montana Sports Day, with its sometimes crazy combination of athletic competition and healthy ridiculousness, continues to punctuate each year, like 1985:

Higher, Further, Faster
It's like a gigantic release a week before finals. Every student at Montana, every event in the Track and Field book. High Jump, Long Jump, Shotput. 80-Meter Dash, to name but a few. In a Montana Special, you throw a ball, run towards a trampoline, jump across a hurdle, teeter across a plank, leap on a mattress, traverse a set of monkey bars, pull yourself across a field (in a sack), run along a bouncing tree stump, and start running a mile. To win, you have to do it higher, further and faster than the next guy. We call it a Cocktail Race. Nobody got a drink.
Yearbook 1985



The world at your feet – Sports Day, 1988











Sports on campus, 1994

Music and Theatre

Music was ringing out over the Zugerberg in the 1980s and 1990s and not only from the windows of the boarding houses. The performing arts were flourishing. The talents of some special teachers were creating a space where Montana students could develop skills that they might not even have known they even possessed and to experience the joy of collaboration and performance.

Class Nights, Peter Oehrlein's 1967 initiative, continued until around the mid-1980s. Pia from Finland was deeply impressed by her experience of being part of the cast, for the fun that she had but also, on later reflection, what it showed her about the extraordinary gifts of some of her teachers. In 1985, Pia's year, it was a production of the Broadway musical "Once Upon a Mattress: based on the old tale of "The Princess and the Pea". Her words tell the story best:

Again, Montana showed its strength as educational institution, being decades ahead of its time in teaching meta competencies such as team skills, responsible self-management and stage presence....Mr. Oehrlein, who was the director, and Mr. Ossowski, who was the pianist, recognised the empowering impact of ensemble work... An artistic production cannot be done half-heartedly; this is something bigger than life - and it is learning for life.
A Voice from the Berg

Montana would continue as a seedbed for drama and music for years to come, thanks to the dedication of some big characters:

Francis Stockwell

His virtuoso piano recitals were made magnificent on his Steinway Grand piano that took up residence in the Aula. The choir made several recordings of their best work and went on extensive concert tours. In 1981, this was a three week journey around the United States from Colorado to California. Organisation in the States was thanks to the parents of some of the students, with former student Ralf Ritter, now living in Los Angeles, making all the arrangements for California. As well as Mr Stockwell, tour guide/teacher John Mather accompanied the group along with Ursula Kläser (then head secretary at the school but also contributor of photography to the Montanablatt and chaperone on many cultural excursions). The tour was lauded as an amazing success, but the singers were warned not to rest on any laurels - they were straight off to the recording studio to cut their 4th disc.



"Once Upon a Mattress" in performance in the Aula, 1985



"The Floating Quartet" performed by Marie Tschudin and Ahmet Sapmaz, 1988



The Choir performing at Disneyland, 1981

Mark Johnson

From the 1980s begins the golden age of Montana's non-musical theatre programme that would last well into the next century. At the beginning of each year, both Swiss and American Section students would be questioned on their interest in joining this year's productions, of which there would often be three, with plays of outstanding quality in German and English. It was all the work of Mark Johnson.

The original "Renaissance man" (Yearbook 1980), Mark Johnson came to the American Section in 1979 to teach English, German, music and art. He would see generations of students through his tenure at Montana, changing their lives with theatre productions that were demanding, experimental, challenging and worthy of rave reviews. But 1979 was not the first time his feet strode across the Berg. From 1962 to 1967 he was a Montana student. The family was living in Zürich and his younger brother Douglas followed him to the school where they were weekly boarders. Back in 1967, young Mark's teacher, Glen Robertson, wrote:

Mark Johnson is the class football nut and has the distinction of being the only fifth year student in German and French who can speak neither. Oh well, he won't need them at Rice University where he will be next fall.

However, on graduating from Montana, young Mark was awarded the accolade of "most talented" in the list of superlatives assigned to those students saying their good-byes to the school.

After studies in Arizona and New York, he came back to the Zugerberg to be greeted by a the very late return of a school assignment. It was 12 years since his French teacher, Thomas Litz, had failed to give the work back in 1967. But it was not lost, simply hidden at the back of a cupboard for all those years and Mr Litz took the opportunity to return the work when the former student returned as a colleague. The incident made it into the Guinness Book of Records for the most tardy piece of homework that was, eventually, given back by a teacher. An invitation from the BBC saw them travelling to London to explain the story on live television.

The young Mark's first ever experience of the stage was as a Montana student in a production of Molière's "Les Precieuses Ridicules" - in French. Teachers Aloys Rosset and Thomas Litz were the stars of the show. It kicked off a remarkable passion for the theatre from which his school would go on to benefit. Apart from a short sojourn studying Italian painting in Italy, Mark Johnson remained at Montana until 2014. His used his studies to create the art programme which, a few years later, included IB Art and IB Theatre.



Mark Johnson at the beginning of his Montana journey, 1962

Below left: "Dr Selavy's Magic Theatre" featuring Marieke Dröge, Matthys Sillevis-Smit and Michelle Namad, 1990

Below right: "The Fifth Sun" performed by Hein Langendijk and Bradley Smith, 1990









Above: "A Streetcar Named Desire" performed by Stefan Kollmuss and Natalie Perrin, 1993

Right: "Ein zu weites Feld" featuring Doris Wasmer and Andrea Wiede, 1994

Thomas Ossowski

Another musician who brought his talents to the school, Thomas Ossowski arrived in the American Section in 1984 to teach German. Although he stayed only a short time, going onto an impressive career as a director of musicals, he made an impression on his Montana students. He was musical director for several productions and he coached the voices who sang in the choir for the Christmas Festival.

Pia from Finland had memories of how Mr Ossowski's encouragement helped to bring her out of her shell as she sang in the concert in front of a large audience. The event was reported in the 1985 Yearbook with words that capture the enduring beauty of a tradition:

At that time of year, it even happens on snowy mountaintops in Switzerland. Dozens of voices raised in song, the tinkle of glasses touching in end of the year toasts, traditional biblical passages, candle-light dinner. Montana's Weihnachtsfest is a strangely proud ritual, both somber and joyful, a break from the normal humdrum of every day when everyone and everything not only shines, it twinkles.

Side-by-side with these organised events, there was an informal musical performance curriculum running in parallel, with student organised bands raising the volume as well as the exuberance of a night on the Zugerberg.



"Bye Bye Birdie" performed by students, 1986. The play was accompanied by a band of teachers and students under the direction of Thomas Ossowski.

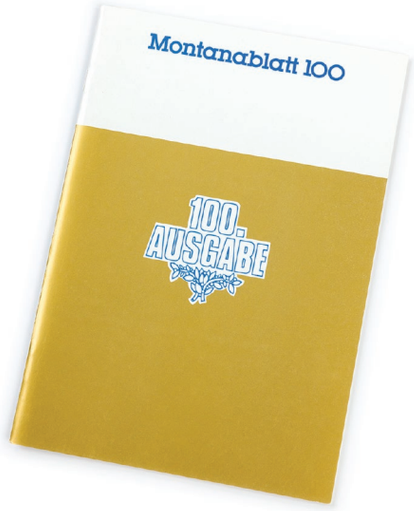




Student band "The Royal Exchange" entertaining their classmates, 1985

School publications - recording life as it happened

As we saw in the last chapter, the idea of student voice was buzzing under the changing surface of inter-generational relations. The Montanablatt and the Yearbook, each in their own way, open the curtains, a little, on more than simply the dates and times of events and excursions. Even though curated by teachers - the Montanablatt certainly so - they provided opportunities for students of the time to say something about their experiences. Their words can be illuminating for our history. And some of the articles suggest that the teachers involved were curating with an intentionally light touch.



The 100th edition of the Montanablatt, December 1981

The Montanablatt had multiple personalities. It was a fusion of scholarly writing, school events and humour. At times, such as towards the end of the 1980s, it would take on a few of the elements of a Yearbook for a couple of editions, with pictures of class groups. It remained, however, predominantly a vehicle for essays and articles but regularly strayed beyond intellectual critique to considering issues that touched lives at school.



The fast-changing look of Montana Yearbooks, 1980-1985

Jean Martin Steinmann, a former student who graduated with a Matura in 1965 and then came back as Josef Ostermayer's assistant in 1974, was guiding the student editors of the magazine throughout much of the 1980s. Teacher Daniel Fridez took over in the 1990s. Fridez introduced the idea of "Leitthema", a theme that structured that issue and was often related to the school's core values, such as Easter 1993 on Racism. Then, contributions throughout the magazine, ranging from serious, intense and challenging to short, sharp and funny, explored it from different angles.

Regular features were the "Poets Corner" and the "Treffpunkt der Nationen", where members of the school's increasingly international community explained their experiences. By the 1990s, we find the occasional piece in Chinese along with the other school languages. During the Gulf war, the student editors talked to Iraqi student Rassan Kubba, whose father was Iraqi and his mother German, and had moved to Switzerland from Baghdad. The conversation explored the current crisis with insightful questions about the reporting of the events in foreign media.

But the magazine also provided a platform for voicing concerns about school life. In October 1986, two new rules received irreverent coverage. Long before mobile phones and MP3 players, the Walkman was banned at school, along with the consumption of Kaugummis (the reason given that both interfered with the quality of communication between teachers and their students). And irksome elements of the dress code could be pointed out as in this comment from 1990 on the requirement that Montana boys wear a suit and a tie to the cinema:

Schaffen wir doch diese unzeitgemässe und lästige Regel ab, und kleiden wir uns wieder wie normale Menschen, wenn wir das Kino besuchen.

Let's abolish this outdated and annoying rule and dress like normal people again when we go to the cinema.

But Montanablatt commentary could go deeper and venture into commentary on the school's organisation. In 1994, an interview with a student who had transferred from the Swiss to the American Section explored the idea of separation between sections. One of the questions asked: is the American Section easier? Even the fact that the question was asked, as well as the response, indicates that the assumption itself was standard at the time. The interviewee enthusiastically rebuts the judgement, impatient with the myth that the American Section is neither intellectually challenging nor hard-working. Looking back, we are aware that the content of the programmes themselves and therefore the pedagogy would have been very different. But that the myth that one programme was "better" than the other existed at all, even if only among a few, is a development of the school's organisational model that was unintended by either Husmann or Ostermayer.

The American Section Yearbook celebrated life at Montana in a different way. Its frivolity perhaps contributed, in a small part, to the development of that myth. Its style was the less curated, the "life as it is", version of the year. As such, it has value as a historical source.



Banned on campus – the Walkman was a joy for students but disruptive for teachers. In 1989 (below), Dr Storchenegger was depicted listening to heavy metal on a Walkman in this "Alternative Faculty" cartoon.



Over the 1960s and 1970s, we saw these annual records of life at Montana becoming less formal. And yet, even at the end of the 1970s and as their fashionably unkempt hair brushed their collars, the boys in their portraits wore ties, even though thickly knotted in the mode of the time. However, by the 1980s the ties are gone. Most of the photos are casual snapshots, technology as well as social expectations changing the shape of what could be recorded.

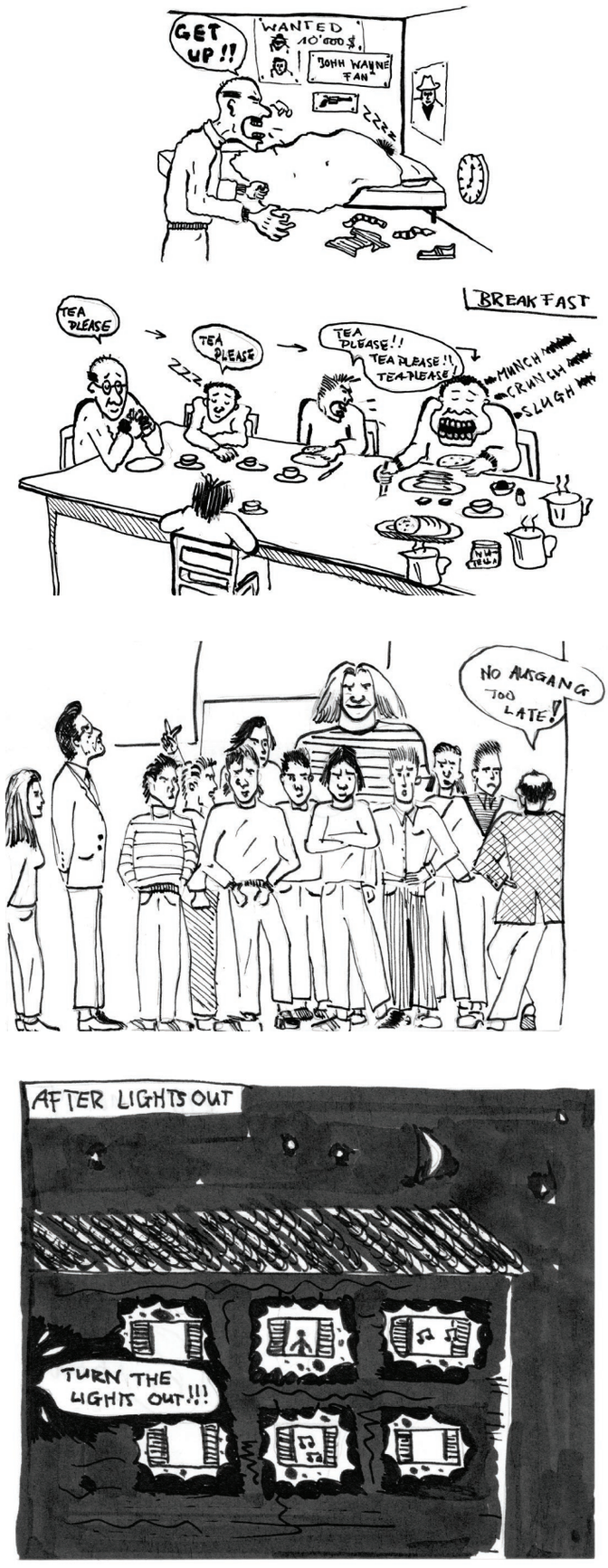
Equally, the Yearbook became more irreverent as time went on, befitting the zeitgeist. The 1986/87 publication took a consciously provocative take on their world, giving the book the title: "Shaping the Future - This is a school not a museum". The implication of being stuck in the past is, however, only lightly touched. The content is an affectionate, lively, and also respectful, journey through the year. It covers the whole range of activities going on in the school, with pictures and words on the musicals and sports as well as the more edgy write ups on departing seniors.

Having begun entirely focused on the American Section, the sense that there is more to Montana starts to creep in during the 1980s with content on the other sections of the school. The 1991 Yearbook takes an explicit step further:

The book is also different from every other yearbook because we decided to give each student in the Swiss and Italian Matura classes their own page just like the American Section Seniors. Hopefully this spirit of unification and ecumenicism will carry into other sectors of Institut Montana life.

This spirit of unification and ecumenicism

Their hope is seen in action in the 1980s and 1990s. We see it in the student led sports initiatives such as weight training and skateboarding. Fun and socialising are becoming drivers of inter-section connections, in alignment with the original model of shared activities back in the early days. Teachers recall how the inclusion of girls as boarders made a difference - there was more inter-section socialising with their presence. Certain festivals remained culturally specific, such as the annual Thanksgiving excursion to a restaurant in Zürich that was engraved into the calendar for the American Section. Even this, however, had developed now that the American Section was no longer predominantly American and was enjoyed by the multicultural group that now comprised the "American" Section.



A day in the life of a boarding student, as shown in the Montanablatt, 1989.

The St Nicholas tradition of rewards and punishments for the younger boys had always involved everyone and continued after Herr Rosset's retirement with Herr Schönenberger in the role. The German/Swiss observance of Fasching by descending the Zugerberg to join the festivities in town was disrupted in 1985, when snow blocked the roads. A new party took its place as recounted in the Yearbook:

Hair Down, Spirits Up
It was a first. The German Section just decided that if they couldn't celebrate Fasching where the celebrations were best, they could at least get everyone on the mountain to let their hair down, for one night. So, one Saturday night in February back against the walls went the dining hall tables, down went the lights, in came the sound system, and whatever you wanted, went. New traditions start slowly, but there's little doubt that when snow clogs the road down to Zugerberg, a little local lunacy beats early to bed, any night of the year.

Another voice on the same event comes from Pia Kiviaho's sparkling memories of the occasion:

During carnival time in February, a new tradition was introduced to Institut Montana, that of a Masquerade Ball... the Grosses Haus had undergone a magical transformation into a masquerade ballroom; the long chairs and tables were gone and there was an abundance of open space for games and dancing. The entire school was present...
A Voice from the Berg

Similarly, the American Section ritual of a dressing-up extravaganza for Halloween saw a notable change in 1990:

Halloween was a little different this year in that the Italian and the Swiss Sections weren't left to look through the windows of the Clan. They were actually invited!!!
Yearbook 1990

Having begun as a specifically American Section activity, Class Nights had developed into a theatrical extravaganza involving students from different sections. In the Montana world of the mid 1980s, as brought to life by Pia from Finland, this heralded a quintessentially Montana problem - attraction across sections:

One benefit of the musical was that students from both the American and German sections joined the project. Over the weeks of rehearsals, I befriended a lovely young man from the Netherlands ... It turned out that there were many who did not approve of our friendship ... When it came to friendships between a girl and a boy from two different sections at Montana, this was pure Shakespeare: Juliet Capulet meeting Romeo Montague... This needed to be immediately stopped!
A Voice from the Berg



Celebrating Fasnacht, 1988 (above) and Halloween, 1992 (below)







Pia is eloquently dramatising a development that, we hear through some tangled grapevines, had an important impact on Montana social life. What greater dynamic to enhance that spirit of unification and ecumenicism than romance across the sections!

Student Council

Progress towards a student council, however, remained in a world where sections did their own thing and attempts to start something, as in the American Section 1965, seem to have faded away. In 1993, a group of students of the Swiss Section established themselves as another new Student Council. Seven students met in the Blue Room. They took the title: Schülerrat am Institut Montana - SRM. While it began as a Swiss Section initiative, future expansion to the other sections was envisaged.

The first meeting was held on 23rd September 1993 (*historisches Datum!* - according to the students' report). They were pleased with the positive response to the project from other students. Martin Schaub became Chairman with a committee consisting of Dusan Jaksic, Stefan Kollmuss and Sinisa Popovic. They chose Herr Pfirter and Herr Hohmann as their teacher-counsellors and Raphael Wagner and Mario Gullotti as "delegates for unrepresented classes".

Although the initiative would fade away as students left the school, the list of goals tells us something about student concerns of the time:

A clubs workshop will find out which are actually in existence, which are in a state of "hibernation", and which should be deleted from the list. A ski weekend for the Swiss Section is to be proposed to the authorities. They will campaign for a smoking room, for allowing more than four students to gather in a room, for boarders to be allowed to visit other houses, for externs to be allowed in interns' rooms, for evening Studium in Felsenegg, and for changes to lights out times. They will seek a new common room.

In summer 1994, the students report that there have been teething problems but they are proud of their achievements. Evening Studium in Felsenegg is now available and the Director has granted permission for them to conduct a student survey on leisure activities. Next year they hope to be able to respond to calls for a bike club.





Students together in 1993

Tipping towards the new century

As the 20th century slides towards the 21st, new freedoms, inevitably, infiltrate school life. Not only has that more sedate world when excursions to classical music concerts were punctuated by the counter-cultural (for the time) privilege of a jazz night been replaced by rocking it at a Pixies gig, in-school student romance is no longer a secret. Students are able to go public with their affections in a way that earlier generations could only dream about. There were, of course, limitations. At the 1986 Fasnacht party, everyone had a brilliant evening in spite of the security measures against "Fluchtversuche zu Zweit" (escape attempts in pairs).



American Section graduating class, 1987

There was another side to these new freedoms. Certain boundaries had to be set, not least the need to develop policies on illegal drugs. It was a subject that seemed to interest the local press who sought out Director Karl Storchenegger to interview him, along with other local school leaders, on the subject in September 1989. He answered yes, the school does carry out random testing, and parents are informed of the results. He adds that, in his experience at Montana, this generation of young people is generally health-aware and responsible, as seen also in the downward trend in smoking (*Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten* 9th September 1989).



Students together, 1989

Contemporary articles on such subjects are interesting for how local newspapers refer to Montana as that traditional boys' school on the Zugerberg. There is a sense of separation from the locality, a dissonance, as perceived by the reporter, between an outside world that was changing and the community up on their Berg. It was reflected in student commentary about being at the top of a mountain, isolated from the rest of the world, about those times when you would like to see something more than meadows, trees, cows and the people you are with 24 hours a day. One contribution was a particularly searing exploration of the term "intern" and its implication of being locked up:



Playing chess at the Gartenschach board in front of the Trinkhalle, 1991

Wir sind eine Gruppe, auf einem Berg (interniert?)
und Dritten gegenüber abgeschlossen. Warum?

We are a group, on a mountain (interned?)
and closed to third parties. Why?



Chemistry class, 1992

The idea of separating youth (and their teachers) from the anxious city that was part of the ideology of the first part of the 20th century no longer applies in the same way. And the evolving school on the magic mountain evolves too. Alumna Catherine Strunz, recalling her time at Montana between 1991 and 1995 from 2001, by which time she is a student in Zürich, talks about the challenges of life on the Zugerberg and then adds another angle:

All in all, I see it today as a rather emotional, but also an educational time that brought me a lot personally. It always depends on what you make of the situation, and I appreciated my privileges even back then.

Students, she says, should wake up and take advantage of all the activities and opportunities. As we have seen, there were students who were acting and singing their hearts out and expanding their minds. Pia in 1984 saw the Montana world as a "secluded bubble", but one where she grew to be herself, where her intellectual talents were recognised and nurtured by inspiring teachers such as Kevin O'Brien and Joan Pelech.

However, the perception of the outside world of Zug (and that of some of the students), of insularity and stale traditions, was creeping in. The advantage of hindsight has whispered that perhaps things needed a bit of a shake up, although perhaps not the drama that is brewing.

In the meantime, in many ways, Montana was open to change and moving with the times. We have seen it with the IB, with the reach of its theatre projects, with the adaptations to boarding life. There is also the new world of information technology.









Top: Final exams in the Aula, 1992

Above: A friendly competition for increasingly limited resources, also known as a game of Musical Chairs, 1992

Left: On tour in Salzburg, 1992

Going Digital

Where is our computer? These unlimited machines have been on the market for almost ten years, and the school does not even have one yet. Any parent considering sending his/her child to a prestigious school like Montana would expect the school to have a computer. With the constant rise in popularity of the personal computer, the school is bound to start losing students to schools that are better equipped.
Student, Montanablatt Easter 1983

Given that computers were still quite sparse in the early 1980s, this comment was somewhat ambitious. Montana was starting to catch the digitalisation wave and by 1984 computers are starting to appear. By 1987, the school had a computer room with the latest Mac PC and a printer. At the end of the year, students in the Swiss Section could start computer studies with a new teacher, Paul Goetz, who also taught maths. In 1991, the Montanablatt editors start to use word processing software to write their articles and the Montanablatt 131, Easter 1992, - as Fridez records in the editorial - is word processed!

Das Beschaffen der Texte wurde zwar noch auf die traditionelle Art vorgenommen (fragen, bitten, flehen, sanften Druck ausüben), das Übertragen auf Textfiles, das Scannen und Verarbeiten der lllustrationen, das Erstellen des Layouts und die Umsetzung in eine definitive Post-Script-Version erfolgte diesmal in eigener Regie.

Although the texts were still obtained in the traditional way (asking, begging, pleading, applying gentle pressure), the transfer to text files, the scanning and processing of the illustrations, the creation of the layout and the conversion into a definitive PostScript version, were all carried out in-house.

A further leap into the modern world came in 1995 through a combination of generosity and luck. The local office of Unilever was renewing its systems. Through the mediation of the father of several Montana students, Herr Van den Graaf who held a senior position with the company, the school was gifted 12 decommissioned models. With teacher Charles Hohmann, several students went to Zürich, reconditioned the computers themselves and brought them back to the school.



Learning Marktbericht software on an Apple IIe computer, 1984



Above: Students learning the PASCAL programming language and storing their work on 5.25" floppy discs which had a whopping storage capacity of 140 Kilobytes, 1986.

Right: An 1985 article from "MacWorld Magazine" which mentions an upcoming summer Computer Camp at Montana, 1985.



The Mac Goes to Camp

Swimming in Lake Michigan or visiting a castle in Switzerland may be your idea of the ideal summer camp activity, but for many kids the attraction this summer will be computers.

Six years ago Lowell Carmony started a computer camp with Apple IIs at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois, on the shores of Lake Michigan. This year he is adding the Macintosh to the curriculum. The camp offers one-week sessions for 50 to 60 boys and girls aged 10 to 16.

Since most of the students who attend the camp are interested in programming, Carmony plans to teach Microsoft BASIC and MacPascal. Although athletics are a part of the day's activities, Carmony claims athletics have to be required to get the kids outside. A standing joke among the teachers is that the students' idea of the optimal computer camp "would be a room full of computers with some sleeping bags, and pizzas served every 6 hours."

Susan Riskind, director of Compute Camp International, is running the first residential computer camp in Europe. Macintoshes, instructors, and approximately 50 boys ages 14 to 17 will set up camp at the Institut Montana in Zug, a town 18 miles south of Zurich. The course, which will be taught in English, introduces the students over a three-week period to programming, graphics, databases, spreadsheets, and word processing.

When asked why she chose the Mac, Riskind replied that she thought "the kids could learn on it quickly and pick up the kinds of computer skills they would need for academic work."

Next year maybe she'll allow girls to attend the camp as well as boys.

She plans to set up a corporate office in Neuchatel, Switzerland–a high-tech area–and offer computer camps and instruction to adults. If you're interested, contact Lake Forest College, Sheridan and College Roads, Lake Forest, IL 60045, or Institut Montana, 6316 Zugerberg, Zug, Switzerland.–*Janet McCandless*



Using a mouse, 1992

Buildings

Back in 1980, as Storchenegger took the school's reins in hand, a perceptive student wrote to the new director on the subject of repairing the buildings. He pointed out that Felsenegg was in an especially poor state and asked:

What does Montana intend to do in terms of planning and financing a new school building? Why are many parents and alumni not being asked to help? Are there any other ways of financing a new building?
Henry Biner

In his reply, Herr Storchenegger confirms that asking parents and alumni is exactly what he is planning to do.

In the meantime, while the significant funds necessary for renovation were unavailable, there were cosmetic adjustments that turned Montana's buildings into works of art. Karl Schmid (1914 - 1998) was a celebrated artist, highly respected for his talent across a wide range of art forms - drawing, engravings, watercolours, oils, architectural reliefs, and more. He was also a teacher of art, guiding his students to develop their craftmanship with a warm and respectful teacher/learner relationship modelled on Pestalozzi.
In the late 1980s, his geometric design and radiant colours embellished the exteriors of Montana's old buildings.
In 1989, Storchenegger could describe the new paintwork as fresh and youthful.

The following year, the interior of the Aula was redecorated although the results were not to everyone's taste:

It was theatre time in the Aula (and it wasn't the neo-Roccoco, neo-Egyptian, neo-Byzantine, neo-Grotesque Aula.) ... Mr. Johnson put on the Spring Musical, again in the Aula (not the neo-postmodern, neo-classical, neo-we don't like it Aula).
Yearbook 1991

However, the graceful lines of Schmid's decorative style have stood the test of time and remain a feature of the elegant Aula.

As well as the paintwork, by 1991 there were new showers in boarding and staff houses, renovations in the Dutch library, renewal of the basketball courts, repairs to the plumbing, new telephone systems and telefax, and modernisation in the kitchen. Additionally, there was the work in Juventus that created the accommodation for girls to board. However, teachers of the time share memories of a period when they were becoming aware that money was tight.





Juventus before and after its new colour scheme, 1988.



Above:
The Aula still retains its unique look.

Right: The only hint of exterior paint from 1988 that remains today is hiding near the west doorway of the Turnhalle.



On a positive note, there was work that cost little and yet that marks important developments for school life. 1995 saw the transformation of the old workshop under the chapel. Originally the site of the ice cellar for the Hotel Schönfels, on top of which the chapel had been built, it was a dirty, dilapidated basement. For a time it had been used by Montana's first punk band, led by student Oli Birk, as a cave-like studio in which to practice. But what a place for the social space the Student Council sought! The SRM had been persuasive in ensuring that the students had a say in its transformation and was delighted with Josef Scherr's excellent interpretation of their wishes as he carried out their instructions. Josef's commitment to school improvement of the practical kind is worth celebrating - he spent a lifetime renovating and repairing everything that needed mending on the Zugerberg. The long yearned-for place to hang in your free time opened on 5th November 1995. First called the "Raum unter der Kapelle" or the "Café with no name", it would have a long future.



Dr Storchenegger and the new logo design on the wall of Grosses Haus, 1990. During this period, Hans Tomamichel's classic Montana logo was deemphasised or not included at all.

Financing development

In 1990, when commemorating his ten years as Director of Montana, Karl Storchenegger listed his goals for the next ten years. Predominant were financial health and bringing the campus up to date. Hindsight, as we have suggested, can be illuminating. While researching the early 1990s, we knew what was going to happen next.

The Montana 2000 project was launched in 1985, firstly through a group of German alumni. It aimed to raise funds for renovations and campus development that would go above and beyond the operating costs paid for by fees. By 1986, several donations were received with thanks.

In 1992, Storchenegger reported optimistically on a group of alumni coming together to discuss the future of the school. They were François Loeb, Ulrich Schüphaus, Rudolf Staechelin and Franz-Hesso zu Leiningen. Their meeting led to the Foundation Pro Montana which was set up on 16th November, 1992. The report in the Zuger Nachrichten the following day carried a statement from Walter Hegglin (former Mayor of Zug) and president of the board of directors of Montana, specifying that the target was to raise two million francs.



A set of nostalgic Montana postcards

By 1993 there were two foundations - Pro Montana Zugerberg with President François Loeb and Pro Montana Deutschland with President Rudolf Staechelin. In a side note, Ruedi Staechelin, when a student at Montana, was a leading light of the chess club who went on to attain great heights in the ranks of chess players for Switzerland and was for many years the President of the Schweizer Schachbund.

In mid 1995, Pro Montana employed a public relations manager primarily responsible for developing and managing the Pro Montana 2000 fundraising campaign. Winifried Wessendorf, a former student with a track record in PR, was hired. It is in this announcement, in the back of Montanablatt 141 of summer 1995, that there is the first mention that the situation is grave:

Dem 1926 gegründeten Institut droht damit Gefahr, nach siebzig Jahren geschlossen zu werden. Deshalb riefen die führenden Gremien des Instituts Montana und Ex-Schüler die Stiftung PRO MONTANA ins Leben. Dadurch können in der Schweiz und in Deutschland alle Spenden vom zu versteuernden Einkommen abgesetzt werden.

The institute, founded in 1926, is now in danger of being closed after 70 years. Therefore, the leading bodies of the Institut Montana and former students established the PRO MONTANA Foundation. This allows all donations to be deducted from taxable income in Switzerland and Germany.

For the school, as the summer of 1995 cooled into autumn and damp leaves stuck to the tarmac of the avenue between Grosses Haus and Felsenegg, life went on as usual. In September, there were football matches and a trip to the Go-Karts in Wohlen. On 12th October, Herr Stockwell gave a piano recital in the Aula and Mr Mather took a group to see the film "Waterworld" in Seehof. On 4th November, American seniors travelled to Kilchberg to write their SATs. Behind the scenes, some teachers have been asked to take pay cuts.

The next hint of catastrophe emerges in the local press. It is an aside in an interview about something else, backlit by hindsight. The Stadt Zug of 23rd November 1995 reported on a visit the previous day, 22nd November, of a Dutch business man, Willem Damste, to the school. The journalist talks briefly to the Director, who likens the school to an export business at the mercy of the exchange rate roller coaster. He mentions that, when translated into US dollars, fees had gone up by a fifth this year, impacting on student numbers. And recession in Germany has resulted in several German families taking their children out of the school.

On Monday 27th November, came the announcement, first made to staff. The school would close at the end of the year. The decision was irrevocable.

So they said!







The Crisis, the Rescue and New Montana

WIR MACHEN WEITER

We Go On



This chapter tells a story of courage, determination and, ultimately, belief in Montana. It was written with the help of teachers who were involved and a contemporary journal written by Francis Stockwell.

We shall meet Beat Bernet, a name that rarely appears in collective school memories. He was neither a student nor a member of staff, but, without his expertise, his generosity and his time, it is likely that there would have been no future for Montana. They are also a few weeks that tell us more about that Spirit of Montana.

For something as enigmatic as a spirit, it proves itself, in this chapter, to have a lot of substance.

The Crisis

A new school year, August 1995
The school year began and some teachers were already worried. Student numbers were down. Were they even viable? Rumours began to circulate, corroborated by a hint that dropped at a Swiss Section teachers' conference, that the Board was in talks about a potential investor in the school. Or buyout?

Over the next couple of months, tensions quietly increased to the extent that teachers were discussing seeking alternative employment. Concern for the future welfare of so many employees sent teachers Werner Edelmann and Jörg Breuer to consult with a lawyer about the status of employment contracts. It was Iso Lenzlinger with whom Edelmann's wife Lilo had been at school. The advice, for now, was to wait and see.

But the anxiety grew. There were letters going from Director Storchenegger, apparently following instructions from Chairman of the Board, Walter Hegglin, informing parents that the future was in the balance. The sense of impending catastrophe hung overhead at a Swiss Section teachers' conference. There were requests to talk to the Chairman, or that the accounts be made available for scrutiny, with no result.

Monday, 27th November 1995
All the teachers and other staff were called to the Aula Magna for an announcement. It was 10:40 in the morning. The students were, understandably, confused, when, suddenly during lesson time, they were left to their own devices. It was cold. Some went outside to throw snowballs.

Francis Stockwell describes the teachers as they filed into the Aula "with doomed looks on their faces". They had their suspicions about what was happening. Yet what they heard was more shocking than they could have anticipated.

There are three tables for the organisers of the meeting. One was Director Karl Storchenegger. In the centre, Walter Hegglin, president of both the Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees. The other was for Herr Kalt, a member of the Board of Governors and a lawyer. The prepared statement read out by Hegglin announced the closure of the school on December 31st 1995, due to lack of funds.

Stunned silence. But not for long. Teachers' voices are raised. They seem implicitly, instantaneously, to reach the same alternative to the execution already decreed by the Board. Surely the money needed immediately, 1,200,000 francs, could be raised with a plea to parents. Rolf Schönenberger stands. He asks that they be given the chance to save the school. The Board is adamant - No. To Francis Stockwell's question - So, you have a buyer already? - there is no reply.



Next, the students are summoned to the Aula (there are barely 200 of them, they all fit). There is anger, there are tears.

As the students emerge from the Aula they are greeted by their teachers reassuring them that a way will be found to prevent the closure. Next, teachers retire into section based huddles in different parts of the school. Stockwell noticed a delivery van and a macabre incident where the old copy machine was taken away and a shiny new one installed in its place.

Swiss Section teachers send out emissaries to the other sections with the proposal that teachers join together in organising (and helping pay for) a lawyer. It is swiftly agreed. American Section teachers congregate in John Mather's room and discuss what they might do when they find themselves unemployed.

By the afternoon of 27th November, Herr Lenzlinger is on campus meeting teachers, taking up their case and throwing a spotlight on flaws in the course of action decided by the Board. There is a meeting scheduled with Councillor Suter about the importance of the continued existence of the school for the Canton. Rolf Schönenberger has contacted the local press, who are also on campus by the afternoon, very quickly learning about the "Save Montana!" campaign.

An evening press conference is held by Walter Hegglin at the Hotel Ochsen. Jelle Stegeman managed to infiltrate the meeting in spite of not being press. Journalists' questions to Hegglin about the school's responsibility to its students prove hard for him to answer. Soon after, the closure of Institut Montana will be the opening for that evening's "Tagesschau" (daily news programme) on Swiss national television.

A crucial meeting that night was at the home of the Edelmann family. A core group of Swiss Section teachers - Werner Edelmann, Daniel Fridez, Aldo Haesler, Jörg Breuer and Willi Amendt - are planning the next steps. At 21:00, Lilo Edelmann returned from work. She immediately suggested calling Beat Bernet, a St Gallen academic and also a professional at refinancing and restructuring businesses. They were old friends and saw each other every day as their offices were in the same building. It was late at night but they made the call and Beat Bernet came through. He committed help that included his offices and secretariat as well as his expertise. A major step forward towards saving the school.

Tuesday, 28th November 1995

The campaign gathers momentum. A large placard in the Blue Room announces "Wir machen weiter" ("we go on"). The headlines of local papers have the drama emblazoned across front pages. They report on the press conference given by Walter Hegglin the previous evening. His reasons behind the shock announcement are identified as a drop in student numbers of 20%. It has left the school with a shortfall of over one million francs and the impossibility of paying salaries if they continued. There was no alternative but to close Montana.

At 08:30, students and teachers are again called to the Aula. This time the leaders of the meeting are Daniel Fridez of the Swiss Section, Jelle Stegeman of the Dutch Section and Kevin O'Brien of the American Section. They announce to loud cheering that the school will go on - they will raise the money. The teachers themselves make pledges.

After some altercations about which "side" of the battle gets to use the school fax machine, an alternative machine is commandeered and is whirring non-stop in Francis Stockwell's room. Since parents are hearing from Director Storchenegger that the school is closing, Aldo Haesler has persuaded Head Secretary Uschi Kläser to forward incoming calls from concerned parents to a room beyond the office where teachers can tell them about the campaign. Other calls going directly to the American Section and the Boarding department are answered with reassurances that the school will go on. Students are encouraged to believe that everything will be resolved. Many are also fully involved with packing envelopes with information sheets that will be sent around the world.

A broadcast on Radio Pilatus features Herr Lenzlinger who received a positive response from Herr Suter of the Department of Education in Zug. The connection with Max Bauer, former Montana teacher now working in the Department of Education, strengthens the chain. The department is shocked that the first they heard of the closure came from newspaper reports. They should have been properly informed.



Wednesday, 29th November 1995
While Storchenegger and Hegglin are sending letters to parents asking them to withdraw their children from the school at the end of the year, Jean Martin Steinmann is masterminding an operation sending faxes to alumni all over the world.

Jörg Breuer and Werner Edelmann open a New Montana account at the Zuger Kantonalbank to receive donations and kick off the fundraising with personal contributions.

Beat Bernet's commitment turns out to go beyond all expectations. His offices, their equipment and personnel, are busy with the fundraising and he is working on proposals for the future.



Thursday, 30th November 1995
The whole school is mobilised, hundreds of letters being written to parents to counter those that have already gone out from Storchenegger and Hegglin. Invitations are sent to parents to attend a general meeting on Saturday.

Another key contact is recruited. Well-known politician, entrepreneur and former Montana student, François Loeb, agrees to a meeting, but he is so busy it must be late at night. Edelmann, Fridez and Breuer travel to Bern. Loeb had sent his son to Montana and was already involved in school fundraising efforts. He believes that the school is worth saving. The commitment of the teachers, already personally donating 150.000 francs to the rescue fund, is a decisive factor.

Friday, 1st December 1995
Storchenegger attends a Swiss Section teachers' conference. He announces that plans for curriculum development are going well to indignation from the gathered teachers and a rebuke from Jelle Stegeman: "It's insane to discuss such things while the school is closing." The teachers leave the room.

The Aula is prepared for tomorrow's meeting. Microphones, tape-recorders, overhead projectors and screens. And a massive sign "New Montana".



François Loeb



Beat Bernet



Iso Lenzlinger

Saturday, 2nd December 1995
With Bernet's guidance, a document outlining the objectives, organisation, strategy and fundraising for a "New Montana AG" has been created and then translated from German to English by Francis Stockwell. It is ready for the meeting.

11:00 Parents and alumni arrive on the Zugerberg. Storchenegger and Hegglin are both (bravely!) present at the front of the room. Rolf Schönenberger makes a passionate speech. Hegglin is forced, unwillingly, to agree to the school's accounts being made available for scrutiny. The papers outlining New Montana are distributed. The meeting develops from controlled to high drama and then takes a break.

14:00 The meeting reconvenes with a new committee of François Loeb, Beat Bernet and Iso Lenzlinger in charge. The goal of 4 million francs is agreed, François Loeb reassures parents that they need not remove their children from the school, he is confident that they will succeed. The next meeting is called for 16th December.





Daniel Fridez, Willy Amendt, Aldo Haesler, Jörg Breuer, Werner Edelmann

The Rescue: December 1995
While the school programme continues (almost) as normal, a massive campaign rolls out, like a huge wave whose final crash into white water is gathering itself. Will we survive or will we drown?

The annual Saint Nicholas celebration is cancelled for the first time in its long history, no one is in the mood, understandably, but final examinations for the American Section are only postponed by one day.

Pledges start rolling in. After the teachers' contribution, the first major donors are Ruedi Staechelin and François Loeb who both donate substantial sums.

School life goes on. On the 3rd of December, a group from the Italian Section visits Lake Como. On the night of 6th of December, a costume party in the dining room replaces the cancelled Saint Nicholas festivities. A relaxed atmosphere with food, wine, music and dancing and the absence of the Director: *"for the students the first visible sign that things are changing"* (Stockwell). However, when students go home for the long weekend, their Ausgangs still need the director's (i.e. Storchenegger's) signature.

There are rehearsals for the Christmas Chapel Service and for Mark Johnson's next play. It will be Eugene O'Neill's "Homecoming", the first in O'Neill's trilogy "Mourning Becomes Elektra". Johnson comments that he plans to complete the trilogy in the spring - as long as the school still exists by then.

Storchenegger is still sending letters to parents advising them to find alternative schools for their children and is on the telephone to schools in the area seeking places. Dismissal notices are sent to staff. The least well paid members of the community - kitchen, maintenance, cleaning and so on - are especially worried about their future. An emotional meeting with Jelle Stegeman succeeds in reassuring them but he knows the stakes are high. He had learnt from the bookkeeper that there was no money left, but he reassured the employees with the words: "We are in Switzerland, your salaries will be paid". Without the servants and the kitchen crew, Stegeman thought, the school was lost already.

The battle continues. Strength comes from solidarity.
The mother of two Italian students, Mrs Bartolucci, is a public relations expert and driving initiatives such as taking the huge "Save Montana" banner down to Zug to go on display at Metalli.

Italian Section art teacher, Prof Vitale, has rallied students to resurrect an impressive painting of the Zugerberg to be part of the display.

On 9th December, it is announced that a new company has been registered with François Loeb as the main shareholder. The newspapers carry the headline "Kann François Loeb Montana retten?" (Can François Loeb save Montana?), with pictures of the Save Montana banner. An interview in the *Zuger Zeitung* with Alain Gasser, the chair of the Student Council, talks about the importance of the Matura students being able to complete the year at their school with their teachers. He also confirms that all the students are asking around their families for donations to rescue the school.

11th December - the display goes down to Metalli.
It has a week to occupy its space.

A 20-page business plan has been produced by Beat Bernet's company and translated into English by Charles Hohmann and Francis Stockwell. It is made into a booklet of which hundreds of copies are sent out. It is a professional piece of work that covers the changes to ownership and governance, sets out a broadly based financial framework, new management principles and a new marketing concept. During lunch time, Jelle Stegeman, with a couple of students, sneaks into the main office and "removes" the postage franking machine. In his room they frank hundreds of envelopes containing the business plan and send them all over the world.

On 13th December Mark Johnson's theatre group stages the first part of the Eugene O'Neill trilogy - "Homecoming". It is a great success.



At the meeting on 16th December the rescue is announced.

Funds have been raised not only to rescue the school from the immediate crisis but also to secure its long-term future. The Board and the Director will be replaced. The interim leaders of the school from January 1996 will be Aldo Haesler with Daniel Fridez. They have the support of the whole faculty. Two new companies will be created, a masterstroke by Beat Bernet to separate risk especially as concern about the interest of a substantial investor taking control still circulates. Montana AG, with Beat Bernet as Chairman, will be responsible for the infrastructure, and Montana Betriebs AG for running the school.

The festive Christmas Dinner goes ahead on 18th December with posters on the walls proclaiming "See you back on January 10th!" There is no director's table. In its place there is a sound system ready for the after-dinner party. The celebration runs late. The next day the Christmas holiday begins.

François Loeb welcoming in a Christmas to celebrate



The Aftermath

In spite of the drama of the previous weeks, the Montanablatt was published for Christmas 1995. Much of its content had been prepared prior to the shock announcement but, in the editorial, Fridez could celebrate the rescue.

The "Leitthema" for this issue, he explains, was chosen before the crisis hit. It is "Berge versetzen" - moving mountains. It turned out to be prescient. Through worldwide solidarity, three times the necessary amount to save the school had been achieved at the time of going to press. There was a new administration to breathe new life into the school's sails. They should be proud of themselves. They have moved mountains. With apologies for late delivery of the issue - "Berge versetzen braucht eben Zeit". (Moving mountains takes time).

On the 30th of December, Jörg Breuer and Karl Storchenegger meet in the director's office. Storchenegger renounces in writing the responsibility for running Institut Montana and hands over the keys. The Storchenegger family is given the right to stay in the director's apartment until summer of 1996. The new director will have temporary accommodation in the Chalet until then.

On the 31st of December, a new year and a new start was welcomed in at a party at the Edelmanns' house.



Wir danken

der Zuger Bevölkerung, den Behörden, den Medien, den Eltern und Ehemaligen für all die spontane Unterstützung, die Solidarität und das uns entgegengebrachte Vertrauen! Dank Ihrer Hilfe haben wir Kraft geschöpft für eine erfolgreiche Zukunft mit neuen Perspektiven.

Schüler, Lehrer und Personal

new Montana Zugerberg

Aktien können gezeichnet werden bei:
Bernet und Partner, Résidence Park, Industriestr. 16, Zug

New Montana

Local press reporting on the crisis talked about Montana as "that traditional school" up there. The impression is that the journalist, and by proxy also the readership, considered the school to be remote and stuck in the past. It was no longer the progressive school putting new ideas into practice that Husmann set up. Behind that reputation, we know that there was some exciting teaching going on. But that was not how the school was seen in the local environment nor by everyone who was living and learning under the roofs of the old hotels on the Zugerberg. The drivers of New Montana were setting out to change all this.

"New Montana" was more than a PR slogan or an announcement of a change of personnel. The spirit in 1995 was of solidarity but it was also about positive change. Or, perhaps, resetting a direction that was perceived to have gone off course. Even before the traumatic days of crisis, there were hints that, internally, people knew that there were fissures in the fabric, there were tensions that were hidden behind the gloss of school publications. The ambitions set out for New Montana turn the lens on those fissures and tensions and the intention to mend and to heal them.

Aldo Haesler and Jelle Stegeman talk about just this in an interview with the *Neue Zuger Zeitung* on 21st October, 1996. They point out that New Montana is far more than an administrative restructure. The financial crisis has opened the doors to a change of morale.

In Haesler's view, the school had been running like a car with the brakes on, unable to fulfil its purpose. Now the brakes are off. This means that the founding principles can be lived according to today's social, cultural and political standards, rather than getting stuck with old conventions or becoming empty clichés.

He explained that the four sections had been living side by side. Now they will work together. Montana students will become citizens of the world in a school environment that is firmly grounded in European culture (rather than any one nation), with humanistic values and ethics. Practical steps forward will be cross-sectional workshops, a student council with a voice and a more public facing cultural concept that will include the work of the theatre group, the choir and a summer music week. He knows, he says, that cultural change takes time. But the first steps have been taken.

Jelle Stegeman added:
Die Situation im letzten Jahr hat Schüler, Lehrer und Management einander nähergebracht und einen neuen «Chorgeist» entwickelt. Für alle ein scheinbarer Befreiungsakt. Endlich führt die Crew aus, was sie schon immer wollte.

The situation last year brought students, teachers and management closer together and a new 'choral spirit'. For everyone an apparent act of liberation. At last the crew is doing what it has always wanted.





May 1996 - Montana is seventy years old
The birthday that almost never was! The functions of the Board and the Trust were reestablished with François Loeb acting as Chair of the Montana Trust, and with Beat Bernet as Chair of the Board of Trustees for the New Montana Betriebs AG. In a display of transparency, the new structure was published in the Montanablatt of Easter 1996. In summer of 1996, the minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting of New Montana AG, Zug were also published. These were clear statements of an intention to earn trust by being open.

Talking about his engagement with the school, Bernet explained that, while he was not an educationalist but a banker, the project fascinated him. He was modest - his work at the University of St Gallen showed that he was an accomplished intellectual as well as a highly effective corporate finance expert. He wrote that he saw his mission as to prove that Montana was a good school and that it could work. He was confident that would happen.

François Loeb sent praise and thanks to Beat Bernet, Iso Lenzlinger, the teachers, students former and current, and the parents, whose solidarity and time (while his attention was taken up by the Swiss parliamentary winter session) won the battle.

With the assistance of an external executive search specialist, it was officially agreed to appoint leadership positions internally. Aldo Haesler as Director and Daniel Fridez as Academic Dean. The sections would be led by Kevin O'Brien for the American, Jörg Breuer for the Swiss, Carlo Comucci for the Italian and Jelle Stegeman for the Dutch.

The Extraordinary General Meeting of New Montana AG was held in the Felsenegg Aula on May 25th, 1996. It coincided with the Whitsun reunion that was the celebration of Montana's 70 years. The Montana Ball glowed with a sense of pride in the Montana family, "our" family, a spirit of cohesion. The Blue Room was decorated with balloons, a formal dinner was well attended by former students from all over the world and then there was music and dancing and a "Prost" to Aldo Haesler.

A strong team of colleagues had come together and had saved their school. The new Director had the qualities of a charismatic leader and educational vision backed up by intellectual strength. With a staff who had proved their resourcefulness and cohesion and an Academic Dean with conviction in the power of education to do good, they were ready to work together for the future of Montana.

Postscript
In April, the NZZ ran an article claiming to have learnt that the closure was a dramatic PR stunt devised to raise donations. The story was firmly denied by everyone involved. Even before this theory was published, Bernet had made a statement that soundly dismisses such a claim. He had expressed his concern that the massive publicity action around the closure announcement could actually have been detrimental to the school's cause, potentially precipitating a catastrophic drop in student numbers. This was averted, he said, by the professional work of the rescue team and the pedagogical efforts of the teaching staff. Only six students left the school as a result of the crisis.





New Montana 1996 - 2000

OUR HEADS AND OUR HEARTS

New Montana hat unsere Köpfe und unsere Herzen sensibilisiert, man hört wieder vermehrt Diskussionen über 'unsere' Schule, erste Anzeichen einer echten Gemeinschaft, in der Verantwortung für Mitmenschen nicht ein leeres Schlagwort darstellt, sind spürbar geworden.

New Montana has sensitized our minds and hearts; we're hearing more and more discussions about 'our' school again; the first signs of a true community, in which responsibility for our fellow human beings is not just an empty slogan, have become tangible.
Daniel Fridez

The dramatic events of 1995 did more than avoid disaster. They made the space for a restatement and revitalisation of what the school stood for. The financial health of Montana had been restored. Aldo Haesler and Daniel Fridez, newly appointed directors, took up the mission to secure its soul.

Staff who were there at the time concur. Teacher Mark Johnson had been around for many years, all the way back to his student life on the Berg. Remembering the energy of 1996, he described Aldo Haesler as the right director at the right time. He was an individual who who could pull the school together as few could as, while a Swiss Section teacher, he was thoroughly supportive of international education in general and of what the Montana American Section was doing. Moreover, as well as vision he had common sense.

Kurt Späte, Montana PE teacher since 1985, remembers the positivity in the air in 1996. Haesler and Fridez were doing a good job, and everyone was pulling together to move everything about the school towards a positive future. Teachers felt, as they had not done for some time, supported by the leadership.





Above:
Aldo Haesler
and Daniel Fridez

Left:
Daniel Fridez
in Tunisia

Creative, alive and full of new ideas

The thinking that drove the New Montana programme was written down, by the new leadership, in articles and thought pieces that brought Montana's founding principles, and the name Max Husmann, back to the forefront. These included an essay on the relevance of Husmann's ideas by Haesler and a three-part history of the school by Fridez. They saw their mission as to recover from "years of stagnation and recession" (Haesler).

Aldo Haesler, the new Director, had taught at Montana since 1984 as the sociology and business studies teacher in the Swiss Section. He had studied at St Gallen and his writings show him to be a thoughtful and a passionate educator. His children, Nicholas and Isabelle, attended the school.

In his article on Husmann he explains how Montana's founder had ideas, underpinned by internationalism, humanism and cultural tolerance, that were revolutionary in the 1920s. In the superficial context of modern, media-driven civilisation, they were dissolving into empty clichés. It was time to rediscover their meaning, to understand what compassion for one's fellow human beings really means, and to return to putting the ideas into action. By living its values with a shared identity as "our school", a truly integrated community, Montana would be transformed from banality into a space that would be creative, alive and full of new ideas. These ideas would mirror those with which Husmann had set out, but newly informed for the modern world.

Daniel Fridez had been at the school longer, since 1979, as the Swiss Section French teacher. Known for his laid-back demeanour and his motor bike, he was also an educator with a conscience. His wife was Romanian and through her connections he became involved in a humanitarian mission to collect donations for the people of that beleaguered country. His long drive to distribute life-saving food and medicine to towns in the heart of Romania entered into Montana's story in 1990 and 1991. Now, in 1996, he and Haesler set out to restore Montana and return to its founding values. Concluding his 3-part Montana history published in the Montanablatt, Fridez pointed to the way that Husmann's personal commitment, both to Montana and to how he drove Operation Sunrise, coincided with the current philosophy of the school:

Verantwortung für die Gemeinschaft übernehmen, weg von der passiven Konsumhaltung der heutigen Zeit, bereit sein, sich für ethisch wertvolle Ziele aktiv einzusetzen.

Take responsibility for the community, move away from today's passive consumer attitude, and be prepared to actively work towards ethically valuable goals.

We are right back to that concept of goodness, the strength of ethics, that had been so important to both Max Husmann and Josef Ostermayer.

Below: Aldo Haesler. Right: Daniel Fridez





From mission to action

The 70th birthday gathering was a joyous occasion that took weeks of preparation (driven by Werner Edelmann) and where torrential rain failed to dampen the party spirit. Dancing to live music from a South American band finished off a night to remember.

By now, peace has returned to the Zugerberg and normal life resumed. Some things, however, have changed. The impact of the ideals of New Montana are reflected in decision making and translating into action. Fridez observed how people know each other better including forming closer contacts between teachers and students of the different sections. Across school publications we see transparency in decision making and a sense of community that is reflected in revamped marketing materials. A two day workshop in September 1996 for all staff aimed to bring everyone together behind the same educational strategy and produced a set of tangible action points for going forward.

Haesler's wife Marianne (who was related to the Husmann family) joined the organisation as the school nurse. The new Head Secretary was Daniela Ottiger but former head secretary Ursula Kläser was back. She had worked at Montana from 1973 to 1989, first under Ostermayer and then Storchenegger. She returned to New Montana in 1996.

By May 1997, numbers had gone up by 30%, from 190 to 260 students.

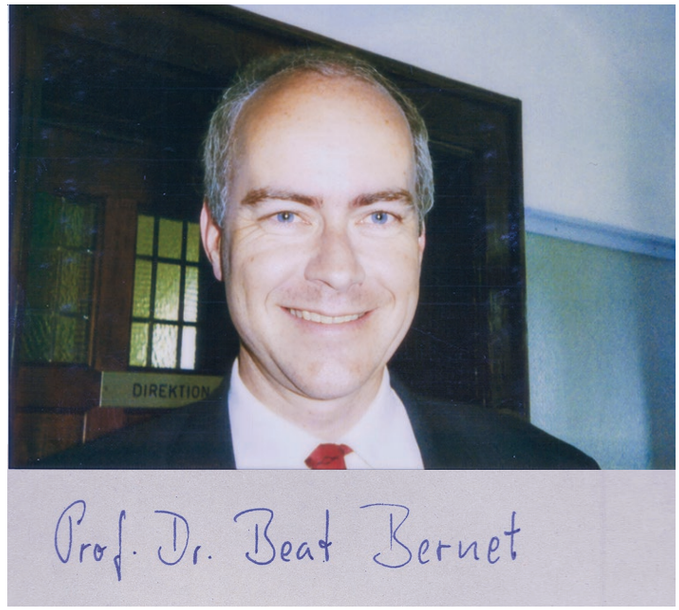
Behind all this, Beat Bernet was vigilant over the school he had helped to survive, working closely with the new leadership. Aldo Haesler recognised his role in his thanks to the community for all that was being achieved. Herr Bernet was, he said, accompanying, guiding and supporting all the developments with a keen eye:

His expertise, his clarity of vision, his sense of connections, have helped us overcome every obstacle.

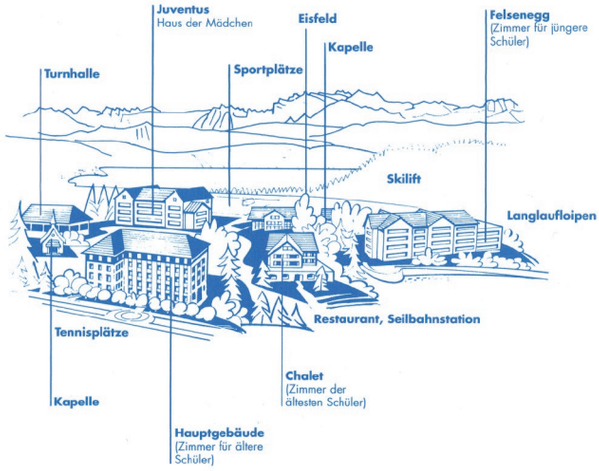


Celebrating Montana's 70th anniversary in 1996
Othmar Wiss, Kurt Späte, and the Grill Crew keeping the guests well fed

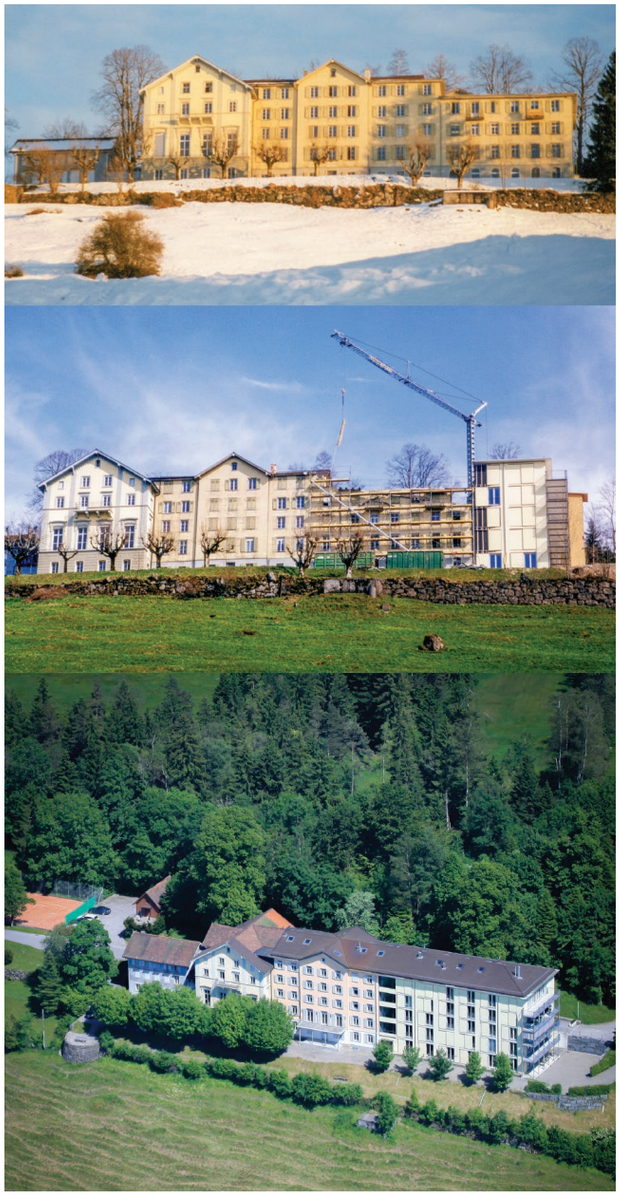




At the Pfingstball, 1997



A diagram of the campus while girls still boarded in Juventus prior to the completion of the Felsenegg renovations.



Felsenegg before, during and after its extensive modernization

Building back stronger

An impressive amount of money had been raised for the infrastructure modernisation that would take Montana into the 21st century. Everyone was aware that the building project was no question of a lick of paint to hide the cracks. Montana now had the funds to embark on a serious journey.

Work began small. In 1996, new ladies' toilets were installed in Grosses Haus, some offices were renovated and showers in Juventus were modernised.

Aus Alt Wird Neu

But there was a massive project crying out for attention and now there were funds to answer the call. Felsenegg. In order to reach the culmination of the Felsenegg rebuild, we shall continue its story over the next few years and then rewind to cover other events in the last stages of the 20th century.

The major works began in 1997 and mathematics teacher Jörg Breuer, brought into the leadership team, was appointed to direct the work. He would prove to have impressive project management skills and he kept the school community informed with detailed (and entertaining) accounts of progress. Careful plans, with Beat Bernet watching the finances, were mapped out over a set of stages with a goal to finish in November 2001. Breuer was aware that the old building might present many unanticipated challenges. He was right.

The first step in October 1997 was the twelve rooms above the Aula, where there was no running water and a wall that let in all the weather. The first nasty surprise - an aggressive wood fungus in the ceiling of the basement below the Aula that was working its way up and needed treatment. Then it was found that the post 1945 construction of additional floors to the building meant that the foundations were struggling under the weight, requiring a major excavation to add the necessary reinforcements to support the structure. Progress was slow and the school was spread around lots of provisional classrooms and offices.

Christmas 1999 and the "storm of the century" hit the Zugerberg. Ancient trees that had graced the avenue between Grosses Haus and Felsenegg were uprooted by the savage wind. Felsenegg's roof and chimney were severely damaged. The building site suffered badly, plastic rattling around unfinished windows, and fallen trees made the road impassable. It was local farmer Josef Moos who helped clear a path and just in time as the next day brought a massive snow fall. Snow ploughs would have been blocked if those trees still lay across their path. But the new century arrived and school went on.

April 10th, 2000, marked the start of the last construction phase. Completion was in sight. However, the structural condition of Felsenegg's oldest remaining section, dating from 1895, was so poor that renovation turned into rebuild. Progress was further hindered by the discovery of a huge boulder over which the original edifice had been constructed. However, meticulous engineering and heavy machinery dug deep and created a framework of strong new materials that supported a solid structure with a facade carefully designed to preserve a sense of its history.

By Christmas 2001, work could begin on the interiors. As the project neared its conclusion, it was announced that Felsenegg would become a boarding house for the girls so that they had their own space. Breuer's communication of the decision anticipated the objections it might raise with a touch of the gentle irony for which he was known. Of course, the decision to create the home for the girls was entirely justifiable on the grounds that the boys, over many years, had proved just how hard-wearing their antics could be on buildings:

Wir hoffen, dass die Mädchen sorgsamer mit den Neubauten umgehen und mehr Wert auf eine gepflegte Wohnatmosphäre legen werden.

We hope that the girls will treat the new buildings more carefully and place more value on a well-maintained living environment.

What can you expect, we read between his lines, from a building that was put up in the 19th century with interior walls as thin as cardboard? But everyone, he clarified, would benefit from modern classrooms, a new common room and many other shared areas, and a building that was now as sturdy as it was beautiful.

Summer 2002 and last minute discussions with the Building Preservation authority about the materials used on the central facade meant that the new school year had to start with scaffolding. As Breuer wrote, again with his characteristic dry humour:

Aus der Traum vom Schulanfang ohne Baumaschinen!

So much for the dream of starting school without construction equipment!







Above and previous page: scenes from the multi-stage renovation of Felsenegg, including when the discovery of a large boulder beneath the surface delayed construction.



For four decades, Josef Scherr took care of the school's maintenance.

Rectangular shaped tiles had been ordered. A new order had to go in for tiles that were shingle shaped. This episode was followed by the residual tasks that always beset building projects. Winter snow delayed the levelling work that had to precede the landscaping. Door closers were too loud and the state-of-the-art fire alarms reacted hysterically whenever the wind blew the inevitable dust clouds. Accidental drilling into a drainpipe resulted in a leak that then required repainting of newly painted walls. But new classrooms and boarding accommodation were in partial use, even if they were in different parts of the house and separated by a building site. Aufsicht teachers had to run outside to carry out their checks of the rooms.

Further discussions with the Building Preservation authority stumbled over some final issues about the cladding of the stairwell. An acceptable compromise was found at last. Agreement with Canton Zug about a public walking path that crossed in front of the building was reached and then, in August 2003, the building authorities of the city of Zug granted the necessary permit and the building could go into operation with new classrooms fit for the new century and a boarding house specifically for girls. Although, as John Mather would comment:

Some of the girls are concerned at the amount of exercise they will get walking between Felsenegg and Grosses Haus.

New Felsenegg had taken four years of building at a cost of 10.7 million francs.

Josef Scherr, who ran the school's maintenance department, deserved special praise for keeping everything going during this tumultuous period. Not only was the school moving in and out of temporary accommodation, other modernisation was always ongoing. And the challenges were not over for him. The year continued with repairing the boiler that served Grosses Haus and Juventus, replacing the whole heating system in the Chalet and the installation of up to date cooking equipment in the kitchen.

The huge commitment to rebuilding Felsenegg meant that daily life had required, for four years, a lot of flexibility and plenty of patience. At the same time, the project was a bricks and mortar statement about the post crisis recovery.

School life

So much building! Ideas and values; bricks and mortar. Building the environment for school life to carry on, to flourish even, while every day life went on.

Students were feeling the new wave of enthusiasm. School leadership was positively encouraging an active student voice in school life with a newly invigorated cross-sectional Student Council. In 1996, the chair could write:

In the last Montana newsletter, I wrote: My opinion on some things has changed. At the beginning of this term, we started with a new leadership team.
I am now quite certain that Montana will not experience such things again: a completely new wind is blowing, which you can feel immediately.
The students now play an active role in the leadership through the Student Council (SRM).
We make suggestions, we express our opinions, and we actively participate ..... With time, many things will get even better. We're already getting new students, and I hear many have already registered for next school year. All of this makes me happy and strengthens my confidence in the future of my school.

As 1996 progressed, student life took on a new dimension as they took charge of the "Raum unter der Kapelle" by now renamed the Grotto:

Finally, it happened we received the "okay" for the takeover of the Grotto. This event was celebrated enthusiastically by the Montana students on May 10th. With the reopening of the not-so-new Grotto, the otherwise cozy space under the chapel was transformed into a brightly lit, smoky dance cave. However, the Grotto is not only a cozy pastime, but it also symbolizes the trust the school administration places in the students; and at the same time, the students' own sense of responsibility.

The students welcomed Jelle Stegeman's Grotto-Gourmet-Club which gathered for weekly dinners by candle light.

In 1997, the SRM could list their achievements despite, they wrote, the difficulties of overcoming some entrenched attitudes but with a director, Aldo Haesler, who was totally supportive of their aims, and about the Council acting as a "counter power" to how things had been organised in the past. They could report positive progress. So far, their actions to enhance student life had achieved improvements to the food with a vegetarian menu, a disco room with a sound system, and a large screen and a video recorder for the Blue Room.

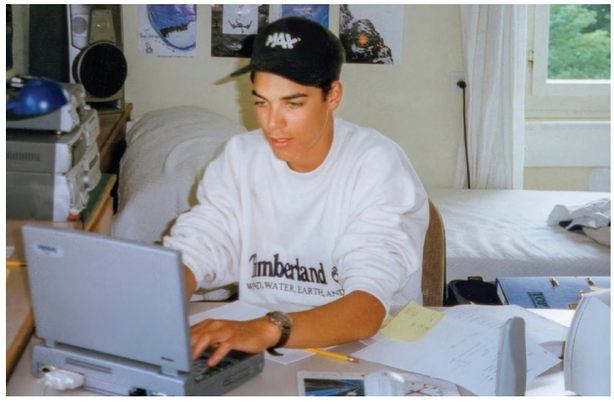




In the mid-1990s, another wave of personal electronics caused cultural change on the Zugerberg. Right: A student in the now-familiar gaming stance. Above: A fleet of students' mobile phones.



Gymnasium students playing around with their Handys in 1998







Alumnus Ruedi Staechelin (class of 1972) playing simultaneous chess matches with several Montana students, 1997







Charles Hohmann and the library in Grosses Haus



There are some ***Montana traditions*** that stay strong and never lose their magic, a mark of continuity through changing times. The visit of St Nicholas remained a calendar event for the whole school, with Rolf Schönenberger in the role. Music at the Christmas party, held a few weeks later, moves to the rhythm of a different beat, however, with hip hop, a rap performance and deejay sessions performed by student enthusiasts.

A new library. It would be a few more years until Montana consolidated library facilities that had developed sporadically in a context of different needs for different sections. Charles Hohmann took a step forward in 1997 with a task group of students, teachers and some parents. They managed to reclassify 10,000 books across all the school's languages. A room was set up in Grosses Haus for non-fiction and fiction was housed in the former "Dutch library" in Felsenegg.

Theatre under Mark Johnson was a bright spotlight in the school. By Christmas 1996, his programme had been running for ten years and was still finding innovations. The Schaufenstertheater brought Montana theatrical talent right into the heart of Zug and a shop window in the passage between Metalli and the train station. After surmounting the bureaucratic hurdles to rent the space, Johnson used it to stage dramatic pieces of 10 to 15 minutes designed to entertain the shoppers and commuters who passed through the busy thoroughfare. That "traditional" school up there on the Berg was showing a different side to the local community: it was experimental and its students were shining. The regular school performances continued alongside the Schaufenstertheater, the after-parties were legendary, and subject to gate-crashing by characters with tenuous claims to thespian achievements.

The theatre group was set another challenge in November 1997 with a journey to India to take part in a Youth International Theatre Workshop in Chandigarh. It was a rigorous programme with long days, an intense but utterly inspiring experience.

Other extra-curriculars. New Montana had identified better provision of extra-curricular activities as a priority and agreed a set of initiatives. It meant a new list of clubs that focused on quality rather than quantity, creation of an activities period in the school day so interns and externs could join in club meetings and rehearsals and so on, an activities advisory group consisting of houseparents and section leaders, a student newspaper and cross-sectional Yearbook in addition to the Montanablatt, and a plan to reestablish official sports teams to compete with other schools.

A menu of sports included skate boarding, volley ball, weight training, aerobics with Ms Tolmich and, in 1998, a golf club. The Montana icerink was well used for ice hockey thanks to hard work maintaining the ice by Rolf Schönenberger. The Orientierungslauf and Sports Day come back, bringing all the sections, interns and externs together in teams and culminating in a cook-out.

In 1996, two students brought their own horses (Cara and Aline, and a foal, Shila) to the Zugerberg and a close-knit riding community formed. Their accommodation was the old pig sty, converted to a stable by Josef Scherr. The horses had to be put out to pasture and exercised every day. Riders needed to be licensed, or only to go out with a licensed rider, and were responsible for making sure the horses were clean and all the manure was collected from the pasture.

Boarding life continued the same but evolving with John Mather's remarkable capacity to develop with the times while building bonds with the students in his care that allowed for mutual respect. Traditional events morphed so that succeeding generations continued to enjoy life on the Zugerberg, while at the same time, developing a sense of responsibility. The 1999 Halloween extravaganza, for example:

The party was so great that even Mr. Breuer honoured it with his presence, although he complained a little bit about the loud music. The main people we have to thank for this wonderful evening were our disco jockeys: Marcus Schwander, Geza Scholz, Erdal Abaci and Nikolay lssaev.
Unfortunately at 12 o'clock Mr. Mather came and said, "O.K. folks it is time to go to bed."
But before he sent us to bed he locked us in the dining hall to clean the mess. Sorry, everything has a price!

In May 1999, the first Montana sailing excursion around the lakes and sea coasts of Holland cast off. The Actief was a 35 metre long sail boat with a skipper who, literally, taught the students the ropes. It would take ten "men" (plenty of girls joined in) to work together to raise the main sail. Living on board in close quarters and learning to cook in the galley provided an environment for many lessons about cooperation and organisation. The adventure was the initiative of Jelle Stegeman, a keen sailor himself, together with John Mather (who, prior to Montana had served with the New Zealand Navy so could be called an "old hand" on a boat).

It was one of the greatest trips we have had. Dr. Stegeman and Mr. Mather were also very pleased with how the trip went. They are now willing to organize such trips every year.
Randal Plomb of Grade 11, Montanablatt 153


Boarding buddies, 2000


Horseriding in 1999






Sailing in the Netherlands, 2000

The view from the outside

Just a few years previously, local press was describing Montana as somewhere remote, as that "traditional school" on the Zugerberg. But now Mark Johnson's Schaufenstertheater was taking the school down to the busy heart of Zug where the local community could witness Montana students engaged in often avant-garde dramatic art as they passed by to the shops and the train station and children could wonder if those people in the window were real.

The Zugerbergfest brought Zug up to the campus. Montana staff and students had worked hard on the project in the summer of 1995, and then 1996 and 1997 were enthusiastically attended events. Despite a chilly day, the 1997 festivities ran from morning until late at night. Running stands and organising games turned into new learning experiences.





Scenes from the Zugerbergfest, 1996

New Montana and a new message

School publicity for New Montana also needed a fresh start. It began with a new brochure, hastily produced in 1996. Its pictures are mostly reproduced from the version of a previous era, but the content communicates a stronger sense of a school with a mission, talking about internationalism and an approach shared by the whole school guided by a central value:

Unsere Erziehung ist humanistischen Grundsätzen verpflichtet.
Our education is based on humanistic principles.

This was also the year of Montana's first web presence if not yet very prominent. In 1996, the domain name montana.ch was registered (a domain name that would encounter its own problems in the next chapter). Another curiosity was the registration of a Montana Italian Section domain in 1999, under the address liceomontana.ch. It included a guest page that attracted enthusiastic contributions from former Montana students (and staff) of all eras and all parts of the school between the years 1999 and 2001.

By the end of the 1990s, with a new century just round the corner, there is a new-look school brochure produced by Jelle Stegeman who had been put in charge of Montana's public relations. It is not simply the style of the graphics and the layout (both of their time) and some more up-to-date photography that differentiate it from its predecessors. It is also the content. Its story of renewal and looking forward incorporates a shift towards a different sort of integration within the school.

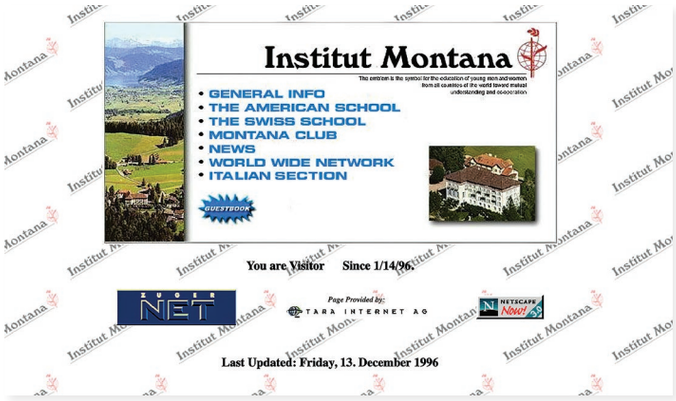
Director Aldo Haesler is pictured with his wife, Marianne Haesler-Husmann. The brochure is written with a warmth that rings of Pestalozzi. An introduction goes right back to original values and then it skips deftly into the 21st century with the importance of personal growth, of awakening creativity and imagination and of young people learning responsibility for themselves, for the community and for the environment. Montana is an "international Schuldorf", a cosmopolitan school where young people are respected and learn to be open-minded.

Unser Ziel ist es, die Jugend zu Toleranz und Verantwortungsbewusstsein zu erziehen.
Our goal is to educate young people about tolerance and responsibility.

There is a notable departure from previous publicity in this brochure. Rather than sections, it talks about German, English and Italian speaking academic paths leading to the different leaving diplomas. Dutch speaking students are integrated into either the English or German speaking path but also take Dutch as a subject. Personal support and the range of programmes mean that students have the flexibility to transfer between these courses.

The new brochure positioned the school as exciting and innovative and yet reflected its heritage. It was a statement of how the intentions of New Montana were being put into practice and was complemented by a new-look website.

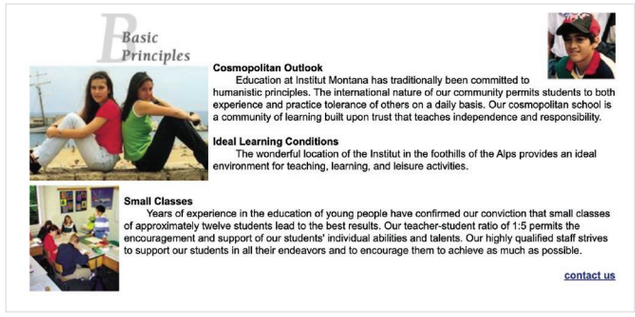
By Christmas 1999, the total number of students had gone up from 190 in 1996 to almost 300 students. We are about to head into the final quarter century of the history of Montana's 100 years.

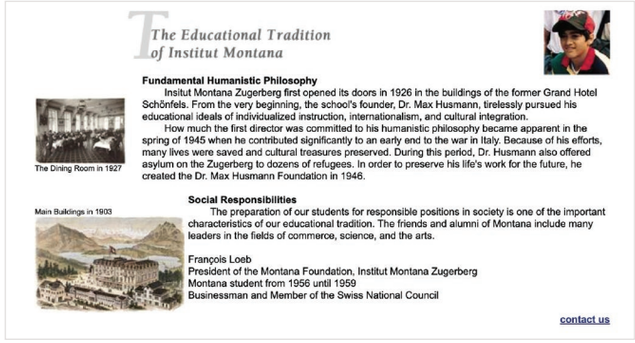


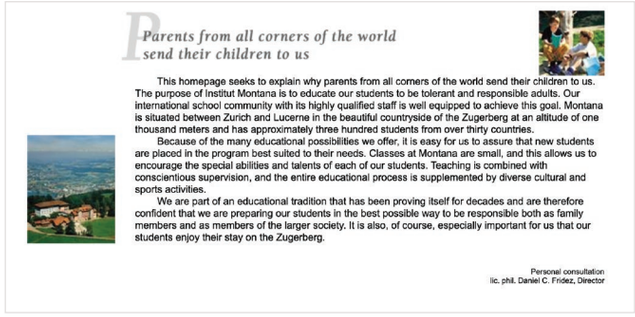


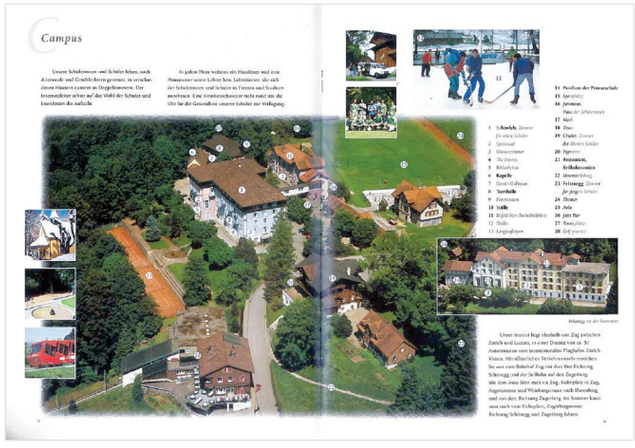
Left top: Montana's first website, 1996
Bottom: The Italian Section's website in 1999











Right: Bottom image – a page out of a printed brochure from the late 1990s
Images above: In July 2000, the website was updated to align with the style and content of the brochure.



Dr Aldo Haesler in 1997

Aldo Haesler moves on

Aldo Haesler would not be joining the next stage of the journey. In 2000 he took a post as Professor of Sociology at the University of Caen. His departure from the Berg was quiet. There are no announcements in school publications.

He would remain deeply committed to his academic world for the rest of his life. His research became well-known for its innovative thinking and he saw many doctoral students through their studies, delivering popular lectures in Caen and beyond. He published a series of highly respected works that show an intellectual prowess that brought together economics, sociology and philosophy. On retirement, he was appointed emeritus professor and, as many academics, never really retired.

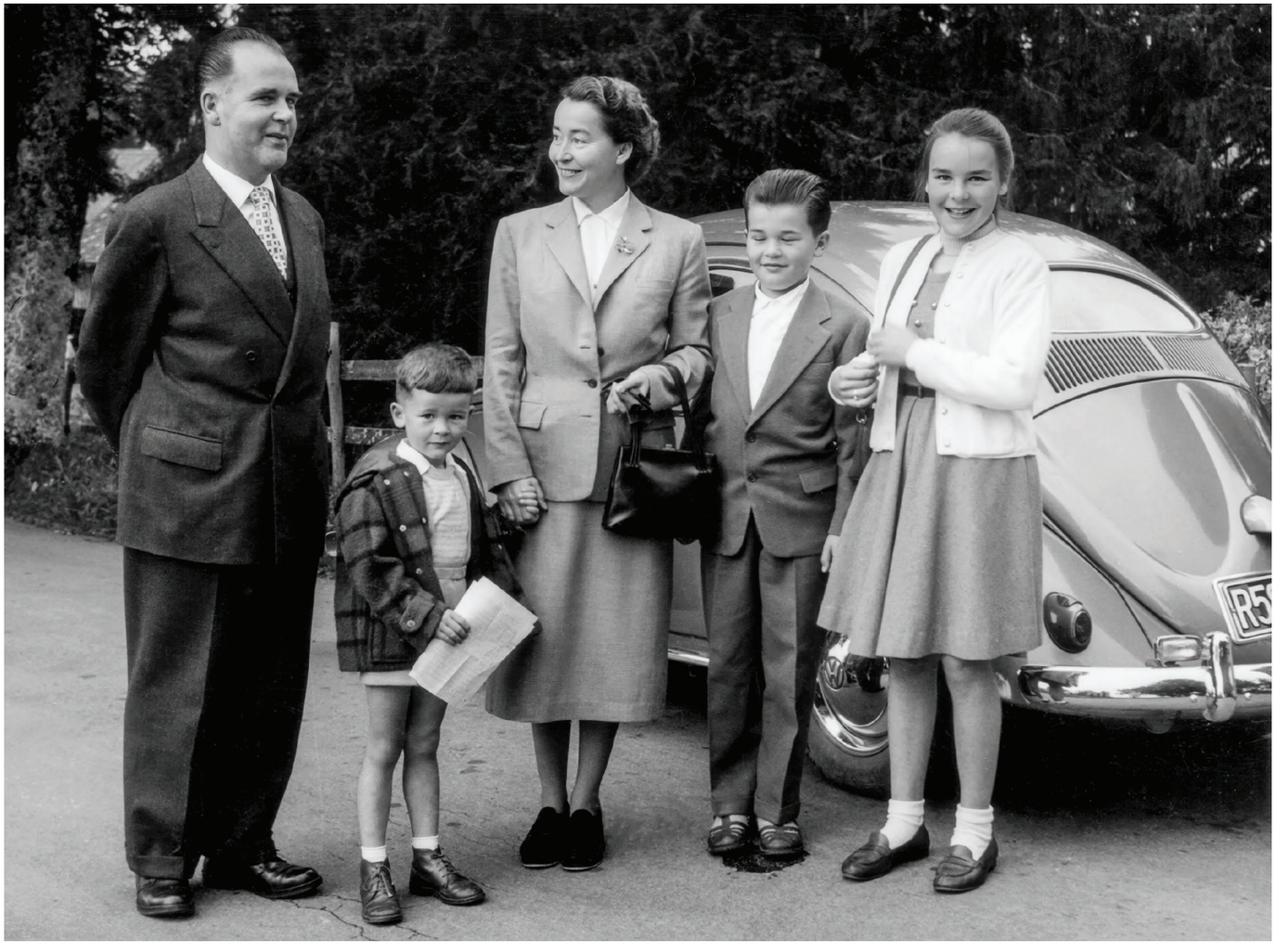
He died suddenly of a heart attack on 14th March 2025. That his heart stopped while he was in a bank was deeply ironic to those who knew his work, an irony that would have made him laugh, according to a former student from Caen:

Son éclat de rire, son amour pour l'observation du paradoxal et du ridicule, sa capacité de nouer un rapport immédiat avec n'importe qui en discutant à propos de n'importe quoi, étaient la marque immanquable de ce mélange de chaleur et de modestie qui le caractérisait.

His burst of laughter, his love for pointing out the paradoxical and the ridiculous, his ability to create an immediate connection with anyone by talking about anything, these were the unmistakable characteristics of his warmth and his humility.
Michalis Lianos

When Haesler first arrived at Montana in 1984, he was interviewed by some students. He was asked to describe his idea of heaven. It would be, he said, *an endless library overlooking an orchard.*

LOOKING BACK ON JOSEF OSTERMAYER AND HIS FAMILY



The VW beetle belonged to a friend of the family, Dr Scheuten from Köln. The Scheuten family would visit the Ostermayers on the Zugerberg in the summer and the children were excited to go on motor excursions – no one in their family yet had a car.

Retirement on the Zugerberg

Over 34 years, the commitment of "Herr Direktor" Dr Josef and Frau Elisabeth Ostermayer to Institut Montana was legendary. They were leading the school, making important decisions, directing and caring for the staff and students, day in, day out. Throughout all that, as recorded on their faces in some memorable photographs, they loved the school. They gave it their all.

At last, in 1980, they were able to retire. A successor had been found and was set to take over those complex Montana reins with the start of the new school year. That steadfast dignity with which they had operated the school was sustained in retirement. Herr and Frau Ostermayer continued their lives in the house on campus, affectionately known as the "Bunker". They were neighbours to the Storchenegger

family who took up residence at the school with children who became, like their predecessors, Montana students. Diplomatically, the former director kept himself at a distance from school affairs, believing that it was correct to give the new director space.

Herr Ostermayer was fit and healthy well into retirement. He and Frau Ostermayer continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s to take meals, usually accompanied by Pfarrer Hausswirth, at their immaculately set table at Montana, attended by Nikola, the Head of Dining Hall whose friendliness punctuated the school day for staff and students for many years.

While not intruding in day to day management of the school, the former director continued his involvement with the Board and the Foundation. He also played an active role in communication with alumni and the Montana Club. He organised the Alt Montana section of the Montanablatt right up until the edition of Christmas 1997, a matter of weeks before he died.

It was a Sunday morning, 4th January 1998, and one of those days when the dry, southerly wind opens the sky and the sun shines down on the lake. As usual, the Ostermayer family went to Mass. Then, an ambulance was called. Josef Ostermayer was feeling unwell. It was on the drive down the road from the Zugerberg towards the hospital that he breathed his last at the age of 89. It was a dignified death and peaceful. As his granddaughter, Petra Schoenenberger added:

Personally, I believe it was a departure that mirrored his life. Apart from having lived a long and busy life, at heart, he was a gentle and decent person.

Memories of Ostermayer as the school's Director are full of respect. He had a special charisma, it was quiet and calm, and it had a profound effect. When those who knew him talk about his leadership there is a set of qualities that shines through their words. Fairness, stability, thoughtfulness, and knowing the right thing to do in a tricky situation. Justice was important to him, he had strong principles, he was consistent. He was cherished for his benevolence, his readiness to listen to problems and to judge impartially.

He had a special talent for maintaining a sense of order even in a school full of teenagers. Former colleagues and students talk about his skill at non-verbal communication. He just had to stand and look, and you understood what you should be doing. Or not doing.



Dr Ostermayer in 1979

Hallowed tradition and rehearsed protocol served as a guiding framework for this sense of calm and the ceremony of the dining hall on special occasions is often revisited in reminiscences of those times. A hush magically descends on the crowded room. White tablecloths are crease free, grace is recited in Latin. Carefully chosen wine is meticulously and parsimoniously poured at the Director's table, a pristine napkin folded over the arm of the Head of Dining Hall. The Director's shoes are always highly polished.

He led by example, his sense of ethics and civil behaviour permeating so that other members of the community learnt from him, as recognised by Peter Oehrlein in his speech of March 1972 on the 25th anniversary of Ostermayer's directorship:

You have taught many of us - administrators, faculty members and students - basic concepts of morality, educational philosophy, and correct modes of action.

In 1981, an interview with students who were about to leave with their Maturas after thirteen years at the school, a young man called Hermann said:

Das ich von Herrn Dr. Ostermayer gelernt habe: Güte, Grosszügigkeit, Gerechtigkeit, Ehrlichkeit, Respekt sowie Disziplin, Zusammenarbeit und das weltoffene Denken und Handeln.

What I have learnt from Dr Ostermayer: goodness, generosity, justice, honesty, respect as well as discipline, co-operation and open-minded thinking and behaviour.

Ostermayer had a remarkable talent for languages. He spoke in German, Italian, French, Dutch, English and Spanish. In an interview conducted to mark his 65th birthday in 1974, he revealed that his main free time activity was reading in the six languages used in the school. He explained his preference for publications from America on psychology, the social politics of South America, pedagogy from Holland (especially his friend Martinus Langeveld, Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Utrecht), theology and business in German, and fiction in French and Italian.

Jelle Stegeman remembered Ostermayer as an intellectual with whom he would do circuits around that well-worn walking path, absorbed in questions on a subject close to both of them - linguistics. As Director, his interest in intellectual matters was expressed in a series of papers that he wrote and presented at conferences over the course of his career. While his history of the school, published in 1976, keeps strictly to organisational facts and problems, these papers are where you can glean more about his thinking on pedagogy. A paper from 1950, for example, on "The Personality of the Educator", is an insightful reflection on the importance of collegiality that tells us about the generosity of his leadership style:

Uncollegial teachers, with their character flaws, set a bad example for the children. They are especially dangerous when they play off one another in front of the children and make derogatory remarks: every denigration of the authority of another impairs their own authority and the overall authority of the teaching staff. Therefore, every educator should see only the good in others, forgive clumsiness, show leniency toward weaker colleagues, reject resentment and envy, and rejoice in every success of others.

Ostermayer maintained a formal way of interacting with his colleagues; he was addressed as Herr Director or Herr Ostermayer, even by those with whom he had worked for decades. However, behind that somewhat lofty exterior, there was a real concern for the welfare of his staff. It shone through John Mather's memories of how welcomed he felt when Ostermayer had insisted that he could make Montana his year-round home. It was Ostermayer's quality of thoughtfulness that deeply impressed the young man recently from New Zealand. Mather would end up making the school his home for many years.

Underneath the formality, there was also a sense of humour. This from the 1978 Yearbook:

Dr. Ostermayer's wisdom and ready understanding of human problems soon gain the respect of every student. His composed disposition to the problems of everyday life makes him the ideal person to run a school of so many nationalities with its consequent inherent difficulties. All students know that they can approach him with any problem and can receive sympathetic and sound advice. Under his serious approach, however, lies a delightful sense of humor.

In a tribute to Ostermayer after his death in 1998, Aldo Haesler spoke of the absolute discretion with which the former Director was watching developments at the school and of his joy at its resurgence after 1996:

Die Grösse des Verstorbenen war gerade in dieser absoluten Diskretion wiederzusehen, die für die internationale Gemeinschaft seiner ehemaligen Schüler und Mitarbeiter immer spürbar war und blieb, und deren Ausdruck tiefer, ruhiger, bewusst führender, aber immer aufmunternder Menschlichkeit über seinen Tod hinaus weiterlebt.

The greatness of the deceased was evident precisely in this absolute discretion, which was always palpable and remained so for the international community of his former students and colleagues, and whose expression of deep, calm, consciously leading, but always encouraging humanity lives on beyond his death.

Elisabeth Ostermayer

Elisabeth Bettschart was born in Cologne, Germany, in 1914. Her father, Franz Bettschart, was the director of the German branch of the Swiss publishing house Benziger. Young Elisabeth showed an early talent for playing the piano. She had a happy life in a thriving cultural city and a loving family. But she and her brother moved to Zug in the 1930s as her father anticipated that the growing power of the Nazi party was going to lead Germany into dark places. She had trained in gymnastics and physical therapy and carried on teaching girls at her own studio and at the Kantonschule. Her brother had become friends with Josef Ostermayer, whom she met at a party at the Casino. They were soon married. It was just before the outbreak of World War II. After those difficult years and as the war

was ending, there came the offer of the Director role at the school up there on the Zugerberg.

The Frau Direktor is remembered by students for her care when they were unwell and her insistence on the benefits of vitamin C. Each day she ran the school's pharmacy, providing students with vitamins, pain relief pills and tissues. But her role was far greater. She was responsible for many of the diverse aspects of the smooth running of the school, capable of taking on different roles as changing staff circumstances demanded and constantly available for wide-ranging duties to the school. Importantly, she was her husband's most valued consultant on every decision.

After Josef Ostermayer died, Frau Elisabeth continued living on the Zugerberg in the Bunker until 2005 and was often present for meals in the Dining Hall. She enjoyed the company of her children and her expanding family of grandchildren. When the passing years made living by herself more challenging, she moved into her daughter Verena's family home. Tragically, Verena died in 2009. Verena's husband, Dr Andreas Schoenenberger, continued to care for his mother-in-law for another year, but, by 2010, professionalised help was needed and it was time for her move to the Neustadt Care Home. She died on the 8th of June, 2013, at the impressive age of 99 years.

The children of the director

When Josef and Elisabeth Ostermayer moved onto the Zugerberg in 1946 they had two children. Verena, born in 1941, was four years old and Wolfgang born in 1944, was only two. Peter would be born in 1950.

For Verena, Wolfgang and Peter Ostermayer, there was no real distinction between home and school. They slept in their own beds in the family apartment, but joined their contemporaries for all other aspects of school life. Their parents took great care to ensure their children received no treatment that was different, preferential or otherwise, because they were children of the Director. Inevitably, that was not entirely in their control and would depend on the other people around their children. But all three have passed on accounts of their happy memories as Montana students along with their warm and loving respect for their very special parents.

Verena was a Montana student from 1947 to 1959. Her daughter Petra Shoenenberger kindly spoke about her mother's experience at the school.

The young Verena felt completely accepted by her teachers and classmates and was confident that being the only girl at the school was never a problem. Her multilingual parents and the environment on the Zugerberg provided a context in which she became fluent in German, English, French, Italian and Dutch. She enjoyed the intellectual debating that was encouraged at the Montana of a time when students would spend their lunch breaks discussing history and politics and exploring what it meant to be culturally tolerant. We see the thinking of those students in many contributions to the Montanablatt, including texts from Verena and her brothers.

She had a passion for the theatre. Her talent for languages found expression in opportunities to discover classical French drama, as she explored in a piece, written in French in 1960, on the theatres of Paris. She wrote lyrically on performing the role of Portia in a school production of "Aiolos" in 1958. Among her teachers, she was a big fan of Herr Bruggisser (Hugo Bruggisser, Montana teacher from 1952 to 1966), whom, she said, could bring any literary text to life.

She trained to be a teacher and worked at Montana from 1965 to 1967. As when she was a student, being the Director's daughter made no difference to her position as a member of staff. Her father, she would say, was a meticulous Director, carefully overseeing the pedagogy of the Swiss Section teachers. She married Andreas Schoenenberger in the Montana chapel in 1966. Their own family grew to four children: Andreas Jr., Monica, Michael and Petra.

Verena Schoenenberger died in 2009 at the age of 67 after a battle with Amyloidosis, a rare disease. John Mather wrote a warm tribute:

Verena had many more attributes but the greatest is that she was a TRUE MONTANA PERSON to the end and the school will miss her interest and support. Her spirit will always be connected to Institut Montana and the Zugerberg. All of us who had the privilege of knowing her were deeply saddened and her passing has left a gap in our lives.

Wolfgang Ostermayer was a Montana student from 1951 to 1963. He went on to train as a doctor. His professional life led to leading positions at a polyclinic at Zürich University Hospital from which he retired in 2007.

He remembers being thoroughly involved in the life of the school and, while it was sometimes hard to share your parents with 300 other students, he believes he learnt a lot both from the environment and from watching them at work.

In his review of the play by Max Frisch, "Andorra", published in the Montanablatt in 1963, he draws a parallel with the assumptions some people have when they learn that he's the Director's son, and how that changes their behaviour towards him. He understands that it is the people making that judgement and it is their behaviour that should be scrutinised, a remarkably wise insight for a young man.

When faced by a difficult decision he still looks back to his father and an incident from many years ago. He remembers summoning his father to a fire that broke out in the attic of Grosses Haus and watching his response. Through all the chaos and confusion, Director Ostermayer knew exactly what steps to take:

I remember it like this: On site, he looked around in the middle of the heavy smoke, then asked short questions and gave quick and precise instructions. In a short time, the fire was under control. This handling of a problem situation, calmly and level-headedly, impressed me very much even then. Later in life, when tasked with making difficult decisions every now and then, I would catch myself remembering that moment as a seven-year-old.

It was probably the only time in his life he saw his father running.

His mother, he recalls, was more involved in the school than is often understood, filling vacancies that covered nursing, housekeeping, menu planning and ordering supplies.

She was cheerful, warm-hearted, emotionally wise and imaginative, traits that were probably only really known to those who knew her better.

Peter Ostermayer was born in 1950, became a Montana student in 1957 and earned his Matura in 1969.

Despite his parents' best efforts to ensure that their children were never treated in any way differently, Peter remembers feeling sometimes as though he was under observation. Not from his parents but from teachers who were wary about what grades they gave him as they understood that favouritism was not acceptable, or from the other boys who were cautious about sharing information with him. His peers need not have feared. Director Ostermayer's absolute discretion meant there was no danger of him asking his sons anything about their school life that might have been problematic.

He recalled his father's strategy to ensure that his students learnt about schedules and set goals.

A very symbolic moment to feel this value was the checking-in before the meals, called "Antreten". Everybody had to be in time on the big floor in front of the entrance doors of the "Speisesaal" before the bell would stop ringing. Even reaching only the last stair landing but not the floor itself and the bell stopping at this very moment meant you would meet my father standing in a strategic position at the top of the staircase. He would give you a small clear sign with his head indicating the way back you had just ran up in record time. The consequence was clear: you would miss the first plate of the meal, because you would be allowed to enter the "Speisesaal" only ten minutes later.

In spite of being a good runner, young Peter Ostermayer did not always make it up the staircase. He too was a recipient of the head shake. Looking back, he can see it as an example of Ostermayer's technique of quietly reinforcing what he believed in. Respect for a time of meeting together was an important attribute. He enforced it without shouting, simply with a gesture.





Aerial photo, 2001. Image source: ETH Library Zurich, Image Archive / DES_01-0341-04

PART FIVE
MONTANA IN THE 21ST CENTURY
2000 *to* 2026



PLUS ÇA CHANGE, PLUS C'EST LA MÊME CHOSE!



The more it changes, the more it's the same thing!

2000 to 2012

It is the 21st century, change is rapid. Montana evolves and adapts, people come and go, there is a sense of seeking an identity. But the direction becomes clear like a lighthouse. Towards those founding values and what Montana does best. The 21st century version.

Roller coaster down the years

From our vantage point of 2026, the Montana we see in this chapter is, in many ways, the Montana of today. We shall say goodbye to a few key characters who leave after long service to the school. There are others who appear in this part of the story whom we might pass by tomorrow on that avenue between Grosses Haus and Felsenegg. We shall meet the successors to the personalities who have coloured the story so far. Already, it is they who are building the Montana that will look to its next 100 years.

We shall witness organisational manoeuvres, some controversial, that shape the framework within which school life goes on. Sometimes significant changes slip, discretely, between cracks in the walls, like the departure of Aldo Haesler. Sometime around 2000, he has gone and it emerges that Daniel Fridez and Jörg Breuer are joint directors of the school.

The 20th century is now the 21st. As we get closer to the time of writing of this book, the focus changes. When you look from a distance you see patterns that structure the narrative. From up close, the patterns are wisps of suggestion like swirling particles as yet to take shape or form. So, the last two decades of the story will be less thematic and more sequence, a helter skelter journey through the chronology. But of course it is not as simple as downhill all the way. It is also a bit of a roller coaster, with ups as well as downs, with twists and turns. However, as we ride with the story, we shall catch glimpses of what it is that makes Montana, essentially, Montana. Where it shines.

Terminology reflects change, as we can see as we follow the story - Montana terminology can be rather fluid - and sometimes it has to catch up. Gradually, at around this time, the American Section was coming to be called the International Section. School documents never refer to a decision to change on a specific date, but, around 2000, Yearbooks and Montanablatts start to use International in some, but not all, of their articles. After a couple of years, the new name, as a more accurate statement of the section's composition and aspirations, stuck. Then we move on, almost without noticing, to a time when Montana comprises a Swiss Gymnasium and an International School. In 2018, there will be a newcomer, a part of the school full of potential – it will be called the Zweisprachige Sekundarschule or Bilingual Secondary School. That comes later. There is also the home of the little children, that meanders between calling itself Elementary and Primary. And, through all this, Montana itself is growing up. Almost 100 years...

It snowed on the night of 1st February 2000. In the warmth of the stable on the Montana campus two Freiberger mares are sleeping. One of them, Loretta, becomes restless. Tonight her foal will be born. Thanks to Sabrina Koller, then in G4, who wrote it in the school magazine, we have the heart-warming story of this joyful event.

It does not take long. The healthy little baby mare quickly takes her first wobbling steps and, by next morning, students and teachers are visiting to celebrate the new life on the Zugerberg. They called her Montana.



Montana students at work 2003 and 2004 -
21st century classrooms and study methods

2000 - 2001:
Changes to the school reflected in the Yearbook

The Yearbook has limitations as a source but changes within it shine a light on changes in the school. For years, you would read it and know only about the American Section. Then, the rest of the school started to appear and this developed further in the 1990s. From the 2000/2001 edition, it was all about all Montana, at the same time morphing into a more formal version of a Yearbook with posed photographs and more curated content. It thus, helpfully for our understanding of the story, sets out organisational structure in context.

In the 2000/2001 edition, for the first time in the history of Montana Yearbooks, the overall director of the school was prominent. The introduction came from director Daniel Fridez. It was printed in German and English and it referred to an overall educational approach - *"our international microcosm"* where *"our academic program allows ample time for fun and entertainment"*. Vice director Jörg Breuer contributed a colourful update in German on the rebuilding of Felsenegg. John Mather wrote a piece in English on the Boarding School. Jelle Stegeman described the sailing trip in Dutch. These were followed by summaries from the leaders of different parts of the school. Under the title Rektorat, Gisella Mahler Fuesi wrote about the Untergymnasium and Rektor Karl Pfirter introduced the Gymnasium. Kevin O'Brien, also with a picture of Assistant Dean, Karen Dobbie, talked about the International Section. President of the Italian Section, Catia Caffarel, wrote a piece in Italian that touched on declining student numbers and the closure of its middle school. The future of the Italian Section (spoiler alert) had its writing on the wall.

Kevin O'Brien took the opportunity in his piece to reflect on the mood behind these changes:

One of the other interesting developments in our section and the school is the greater cooperation among the sections. As the International section, we are delighted to have members of both the Swiss and the Italian faculties teaching courses in our section. We are equally happy to provide them with members of our staff. The school is showing more signs of integration and becoming a truly international school. All things considered, we should be a school well equipped to provide an education for the twenty-first century.
Kevin O'Brien, Dean



Daniel Fridez, Jörg Breuer, Karl Pfirter, Kevin O'Brien, Gisella Mahler Fuesi, John Mather and Catia Caffarel

School life in the Yearbook is no longer the busy collage of exuberant, sometimes provocative, snapshots into which it had developed. The report on each section now has student portraits with class group photos taken on locations across the campus. Reports on theatre, sports activities and the trip to St. Moritz add life. There is a beautiful photograph, taken by John Mather, of the new biotop, glowing in richly autumnal colours. From now, the Yearbooks continue along this trajectory, a colourful summary of the year but no longer the slightly anarchic entertainment of the student produced version.

2001

In September 2001, school had barely begun when, on the 11th of September, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre burned and crashed. The destruction filled everyone's minds and hearts. Sports Day, held as scheduled on 27th September, was a sun-filled occasion that was also emblematic of a vision of a world where such devastation and tragedy, wrought by humans, would not happen. In the school community, it was given meaning as a symbol of the people of the world getting on together, no matter the continent, culture, religion, of their birth.

2002

In summer 2002, a new Board of Directors was elected. Beat Bernet stepped down as President and his place was taken by Ruedi Staechelin who had been a student from 1968 to 1972.

At the 2002 graduation ceremony for the International Section, the recipient of High Honours and a special award for the best thesis was a young man from Sweden called Paul Widén. We shall be meeting him as a teacher in just a few years' time.

August 2002 saw the end of a two year court case and the consequent change of Montana's domain name. The mountain resort of Crans Montana had claimed, first with the Valais Cantonal Court and then with the Federal Supreme Court, that it had more right to the domain name montana.ch than the school in Zug. Both courts ruled in favour of Crans Montana and the school adopted the domain montana-zug.ch.





Boarders swimming in the biotop not long after its creation and, a little later, countless frogs taking up residence



In 2002, the girls finally left their boarding accommodation in Juventus and moved into the newly renovated Felsenegg building. This photo album celebrated "The last girls in Juventus 2002".

2003: The closure of the Italian Section
The year 2002/03 was the final year for the Italian Section at Institut Montana.

There were many reasons for the decline in the numbers of families sending their children to be educated at an Italian school in Switzerland, and none were about the performance of Montana's Italian Section which had continued to provide a high standard of education for its students. For a start, the families who were "Gastarbeiter" in the 1960s were now settled in Switzerland and sending their children to local schools. Furthermore, an officially recognised Italian school outside of Italy was no longer the attraction it was before international schools became international. The world had moved beyond a model of international education where students travel to school in faraway places but study the culture of their homeland and graduate with nationally specific diplomas. A temporary merger with Institut auf dem Rosenberg made provision for current Italian students at Montana so that they could finish their Liceo in Switzerland.

As Kevin O'Brien would say at the IS graduation of 2005: *If the school were to survive it had to evolve and evolve it did*. In this context, Montana had evolved from a school of many sections. Now there were two. The extent to which they were one school, or not, became like a refrain, periodically repeated, over the next years.

2003: Going smoke-free!
We have witnessed a lot of smoking on the Montana campus over the years and the change to smoke-free is relatively recent. It began in the early 2000s when Montana signed up to the Charter for Smoke-free Sports. It was still a small step as its stipulations suggest:

1. *There is to be no smoking on Montana premises (sports field, ice rink, gymnasium, Weber house).*
2. *There is to be no smoking in any sports gear.*
3. *Teachers will refrain from smoking during training and competitions as well as onlookers.*

A small but a notable step and its aims were mirrored in an art project where students created no-smoking campaign posters whose uncompromising messages were published in the Montanablatt in 2003.


Some of the faculty, 2003





2004: Organisational manoeuvres

Sometime around the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004, the Board of Directors decided to appoint a new director. The post was advertised and a candidate chosen. Oliver Schmid was introduced to the school by Chair of the Board Ruedi Staechelin at a meeting in the Aula on 26th February 2004. Oliver Schmid, the announcement explained, was fluent in the languages of the school. He had experience in the hotel business, at the tourism college in Chur and managing sports and restaurant businesses in Valbella. Daniel Fridez and Jörg Breuer would remain in charge of academics, boarding and administration with the new "Direktionspräsident" as overall director.



Oliver Schmid

Schmid took up the post on 1st March. He was cosmopolitan, having worked across the globe including in Brazil. His background was tourism rather than education but he embraced his new project and began by organising personal meetings with nearly every member of staff. Unlike previous Montana directors, he would live off campus with his family.



A famous alumnus - Montana in the news

March. Media attention, not unwelcome, pivots towards Montana as former student and US Senator from the state of Massachusetts, John Kerry, wins the democratic nomination to stand against George W. Bush in the forthcoming presidential elections. The press was fascinated by the story of the young boarder from the USA who attended school in Switzerland for a year in 1954/55 when he was 11. Newspaper and TV reporters, including CNN, visited the campus and the school enjoyed the limelight.



Fast forward to election night on 2nd November. As the votes were counted, Montana held a breakfast party in the dining hall watching coverage projected onto a large screen. Kerry was standing as an alternative to the polarising and increasingly unpopular actions of George W. Bush, specifically the invasion of Iraq. Sadly for those rooting for Kerry at Montana, he was not able to unseat the republican. Bush's war continued.



More organisational manoeuvres to close the year

School numbers were fluctuating after the post crisis boom. By 2004, the number of students in the International Section (IS) had nearly tripled since the 1995 crisis. The decline in the Swiss Section at the turn of the century was showing signs of reversing. In 2004, total school numbers were around 244 students with a ratio of boarding to day students hovering around 60% to 40%. In September, Mark Johnson and Daniel Fridez were celebrated for their 25 years each at Montana.



On Tuesday, 2nd November 2004, Montana hosted guests and the news media to watch the results of the US presidential election. John Kerry's former Juventus roommate Axel Fuesers showed where they lived and described him as an avid athlete, especially good at tennis.

In the middle of October, the Board organised a workshop consisting of a "select team". The idea was to develop a new vision for Institut Montana Zugerberg. The team consisted of "Verwaltungsratspräsident" Ruedi Staechelin, member of the Board Marc Loeb, lead director Oliver Schmid, and director Jörg Breuer and director Daniel Fridez. There were the leaders of sections Kevin O'Brien, Karl Pfirter and Gisella Mahler, and John Mather for boarding. IS teacher Marian Conran and Head of IS Administration, Minka Peeters, were present. Patrick Odermatt represented the Montana Club. A new motto - Education with a View! - emerged from the meeting along with a new mission statement and a list of strategic goals.

There is no evidence that the two events were connected except for the timing, but, two weeks later, Daniel Fridez resigned. The local press reported on 30th October, curious about the sudden departure. Fridez briefly answered questions from journalists and hinted at what could be interpreted as "burn-out", along with internal tensions, as the reasons. The school declined to comment. Staff were informed with a short, non-explanatory note at the beginning of November.

Daniel Fridez

Fridez arrived at Montana in 1979, attracted by its cosmopolitan and multicultural character. As a student, he wrote his thesis at the University of Zürich on the grammar of the French dialect of the Ajoie region. He was already travelling with his Deux Chevaux and guitar to countries in Eastern Europe, many of which were still behind the Iron Curtain, learning their languages and immersing himself in the culture. He volunteered as a translator for the Swiss Red Cross and accompanied the air rescue service with a dog team in Bucharest in their search for people buried by the 1977 earthquake. This triggered a long-lasting mission to help out the Romanian people.

His wife was Romanian and, through her family, he had connections that enabled him personally to contribute to initiatives to improve lives in that beleagured country, so challenged by political and natural calamities. He involved Montana students in his missions to send medical aid supplies to Romania in the 1990s.

When Fridez died in 2016, former student Eliane Ettmüller (SG 1993-95) wrote a piece on one of her favourite teachers. It tells us a bit more about his special qualities. He was modest, she explained, about his enormous linguistic talent (he was fluent in German, French, Romanian, Spanish, Italian, and English, and also learned Chinese), expressing himself always with what his student beautifully described as "the nonchalance and worldliness of a 1968 beat generation". It was a style, she found, that encouraged his students to achieve their best.





Daniel Fridez on the move

2005: Going bilingual

The off-site meeting in November 2004 identified bilingual German/English programmes as a target initiative. Montana already had a bilingual primary school, then for children in Grades 5 and 6, teaching the curriculum in both German and English. Such provision made it easier to keep options open towards a secondary education that could be Swiss or international. But the potential of extending the bilingual programme called. Overseas families were hearing about prestigious universities in Switzerland, predominantly the ETH, offering high-level further education in emerging technologies. A route to gain entrance through obtaining a Swiss Matura was an attraction that Montana could offer. The project was kicked off and Rektor of the Swiss Section, Karl Pfirter, brought Ana Verhar over from the International Section to lead Montana's bilingual Swiss Matura.



Ana Verhar

2006: Montana is 80 years old

The traditional Whitsun gathering that brought alumni "home" to the Zugerberg was an especially auspicious occasion marking the 80th birthday of the school and 40th birthday of the Montana Club that had been founded by Dr Ostermayer in 1966. Over 170 former students gathered in the dining hall where, during the feast, a "journey through time" with over 1,000 archive photos displayed on a big screen was accompanied by the music of each era.











Celebrating Montana's 80th anniversary in 2006

2007: two retirements

After almost 40 years at Montana (1968-2007), Jelle Stegeman retired from the school's staff although he would continue to work on his research and publications on German philology, first attached to the University of Zürich and later to Leiden University. Although remembered as Head of the Dutch Section, Stegeman's contributions to the life and spirit of Montana went far beyond this role. A brief list would range over the Grotto, sailing trips, PR, the early websites, field hockey, ski trips, brochures and Yearbooks, and, significantly, the introduction of the International Baccalaureate.

Jörg Breuer retired after 35 years. He arrived in 1972 as a teacher of mathematics and then physics, led the Gymnasium from 1996 and was made a vice director of the school from 2000. His role as part of the driving team in the rescue of Montana in 1995 and its subsequent revival was invaluable. He will always be remembered for his success with the Felsenegg renovation project, a task that required skills with budgets, logistics, and negotiations with builders, architects and local authorities beyond what he could have anticipated when he trained to be a teacher. It became a building of which the school is proud, with an exterior that honours its past and an interior that provides high quality facilities for living and for learning.

2007 - Learning resources in the new Mediathek

Coherence was brought (some would say - at last) to Montana's library facilities. They had been dispersed around the school both in location and substance following the model of different resources for different sections.
Thanks to a generous gift from alumnus Pierre Mirabaud, the Mediathek officially opened in Grosses Haus in November 2007. Teacher Charles Hohmann, whose talents embraced information technology as well as history and academic research, was in charge. The occasion began with a visit to a display in the Aula of the valuable collection of books from Montana's first library. It then moved to the new Mediathek. Thanks to Mirabaud's generosity, it was not simply about new furniture. A database and a set of workstations meant that Montana's own collection could be browsed online and libraries all over the world were accessible for students to use for their research. The Mediathek would also serve as a venue for presentations from authors about their work.

Renovations of the science laboratories in summer 2007 showed a further commitment to modernise Montana's learning resources as well as its buildings.





In 2005, the alumnus and film director Marc Forster visited his alma mater, signed autographs and stopped by Marcel Hediger's G5 class. His most successful films followed later, such as "The Kite Runner", "Quantum of Solace", "World War Z" and "A Man Called Otto".





A newly refitted chemistry laboratory and a scene from "The Last Act (of The Merchant of Venice)", the first play to be staged in the lower level of the newly renovated Mediathek, March 2009.

School improvement for the 21st century

Let us take stock for a moment of such changes and their intersection with the development of Montana. In the wider world of education, this is a period when evidence based school improvement was driving schools better to serve the needs of their students. We have reached a time when Montana teachers, many of them trained in this context, were bringing this mindset to their work. Their work was, of course, the rather distinctive environment of Institut Montana.

Activities: cultural and sporting

By the 2000s, the holistic view of schooling that inspired Max Husmann was widely accepted and the provision of learning opportunities beyond the formal curriculum had become mainstream. As purely a boarding school, Montana had, historically, met such provision through afternoon activities and clubs. However, as the proportion of day students increased, a new approach to co-curricular provision was required. At the same time, Montana was caught between differing models of schooling. US and UK day schools had a tradition of extracurricular activities while day schools in Europe had developed differently and had a stronger separation of school and out of school activities. It was inevitable there would be different expectations in different parts of the school.

In 2003, the appointments of Tim Jenner and Jackie Locke as sports and activity coordinators aimed to energise life at school beyond the formal curriculum - and, some might have said, beyond hanging around in the well-known corners for hanging. Boarding students of the 21st century aspire, apparently, to freedoms unimaginable to their forebears of the 1950s. But perhaps not so different when we remember those young men of the 1930s, taking the music down to a café in Zug.

Drama continued, full of vitality, creation and commitment under Mark Johnson's lead. The Schaufenstertheater project was taking the school off the Zugerberg and down to Metalli. In 2002 it was "Scenes from Casablanca" as a series of short performances from the shop front. The production was restaged in the Clan with cabaret style seating. Another initiative, in 2008, took the drama group to a school theatre festival at the Kantonschule in Zug:

The entire affair was truly a "Montana" event in that even alumni participated. Martin Kuhn singlehandedly organized the lights, sound, and projections for the show, and Stefan Kollmuss recorded many voice-overs and provided valuable help with directing the play. Eight students from both the International and Swiss Sections performed the piece. A tough work to put on. I have never been prouder of a group of our students than I am of the cast of "1913 or Nude Descending a Staircase".
Mark Johnson





Theatre productions in the Aula, 2004 (above) and 2005 (below)



The Montanablatt is now led by teacher Winifried Pogorzelski. It has developed into a magazine format report of the year combined with a medium where student talent could be on display although less of a platform for commentary on school affairs than it had been in the past.

Sport, competitive and purely for the fun of it, was, as always, celebrated. The 2002 Athletic Sports Awards evening organised by Mrs Arcuri, Mr Sleight and Mr Späte, reported on a successful year. Montana had achieved many 1st place finishes in over 14 athletics tournaments and several medals in the SGIS Cross Country Championships. The Senior Boys Basketball team also received special commendation. As Maria Arcuri wrote about the Awards:

The theme of the evening focused on student involvement: finding a passion and the way to do this by participating in a sport activity. Let us remember to search for our passions: dream. "For those who dream, there is no such word as impossible." Life Inspirations. By working together, great things happen.

More sports options were adding variety to the menu. In 2002, a beach volleyball court with dimensions for international competition rules was created. By 2005, the Yearbook shows students participating in mountain biking, river rafting, indoor climbing, volleyball, go-karting as well as the ages-old pursuits of sledging and skiing.

A new event at the Sports Charity Day on 4th June 2002 was the unexpected hit of the day, and the brainchild of two teachers - Ed Pentin and William Sharpe: "Soak the Teacher"!

The idea was that a bucket full of water would be rigged up, above a teacher sitting in a chair and the pupils should pay for the privilege of throwing balls at the bucket, to try and knock it off and soak the poor unfortunate beneath. A lot of students paid their money happily for the chance to soak the teachers who had forced horrible home-works on them all year. Mr Mark Johnson and Mr Karl Pfirter acquitted themselves admirably by taking the seat many times and getting soaked way beyond the call of duty. Mr Robert Hirsch was asked to join in on several occasions but declined on account of being an American.
Paul Gillespie

Luckily the day was warm and sunny.



The Matura class of 2012 and Winifried Pogorzelski



Beach volleyball in 2002



Annual Sports Days had become entertainment through activity, masterminded by legendary sports teacher Kurt Späte, bringing the school together around a version of light athletics where laughter was a prerequisite. In September 2003, teams named after around twenty different sorts of fruit "competed" in obstacle races, a water slide, and much more, on a beautiful sunny day. The theme of insects set teams of Wasps, Spiders, Centipedes, Millipedes and even Tarantulas running around the sports field in October 2005, on one of those warm autumn days when the trees are turning golden against a sky of brilliant blue.

2005 closed with perhaps the last good snow for skiing on the Zugerberg and made possible by Adam Lidgate who dug out the ski lift.

Information Technology is now part of the formal curriculum but it is not only about IB requirements. Charles Hohmann's Robotics Workshop added fun and competition for IT enthusiasts. In November 2005, their "Unterwasser-Roboter" AQUABOT, developed and tested over eight weeks, reached the quarterfinals at the Lego League Roboter Wettbewerb, a great achievement for a first attempt.

Montana joins the Model United Nations. The first delegation of Montana students to attend a Model United Nations conference travelled to Bratislava, Slovakia in 2005. They went to another conference in Basel in 2008. Model United Nations is all about cooperative, experiential learning that helps young people broaden their world view by understanding and navigating different viewpoints. As such, it is entirely in line with Montana's founding values. At this early stage of the Montana Model United Nations, only a handful of students participated. That will change dramatically in the next chapter.





Montana students attend the Model United Nations in Paris, 2010.



The early 2000s were an active time for Montana team sports such as football and basketball.







Sports teams in 2005 – indoor football, volleyball and basketball

Accreditation, signing up for school improvement

In 2007, Montana applied for CIS accreditation and Katja Hokkinen (now Valentino) of the International School was appointed to lead the project. A Council of International Schools (CIS) accreditation award reassures prospective parents that a school reaches high standards across criteria from quality of teaching and learning to health and safety. But it is far more than a badge. CIS schools commit to upholding a clear set of values that guides everything they do. The excellence bar is set high.

A delegate from the CIS visited Montana in spring 2007 and agreed the school could be granted candidate status. This meant it could start on the self-study process that would culminate in a visit from a team of CIS accreditors that was scheduled for April - May 2009.

CIS accreditation is based around a self-study that requires a school to look at itself self-critically to understand how it should live up to its guiding values. Montana was fortunate. Going back to the core values that Max Husmann had identified all those years ago provided a strong foundation from which the school could continue to grow. But the CIS framework set Montana an extra challenge. It was developed on the basis that a school was one school, not two schools that did things separately, in different ways. The process would lead the school to look more deeply into what made what made Montana, as a whole, special. To see itself as one school.

Schmid's consultative approach had led to the development of an "Extended Board", effectively an advisory team for the director. It consisted of the Rektor of the Gymnasium Karl Pfirter, the Rektorin of the Untergymnasium Gisella Mahler, the Head of Hotellerie and Infrastructure Herbert Reichmuth, the Head of Boarding John Mather, and the Head of the International Section Kevin O'Brien. However, some personnel changes in the next couple of years lead us to speculate that the Extended Board might not have been a cohesive unit with a shared vision for Montana, but rather had different, and sometimes opposing, agendas.



Katja Hokkinen (now Valentino)







Montana Boarding School 21st Century style

John Mather reached his 30th year on the Zugerberg in 2001 and those important Ausgangs are no longer signed by the director of the school but by the Head of Boarding. Mark Johnson's words to celebrate those 30 years bear witness to Mather's special quality of maintaining consistent values while growing with the times:

Through it all, he has adapted to almost everything, but always in light of the values of honesty, politeness, diligence, and consideration for others that he has always taught here.....It is no accident that when alumni come to visit Montana, John Mather's door is one of the first they knock on. Perhaps his greatest quality is the assurance he gives students that he is interested in them, that he cares about them, and that even though he may sometimes have to punish them, bygones are bygones, and he will always be there to help them if they have problems. Our school would be a very different place were it not for the constant, reassuring presence of Mr. Mather.

By the end of the school year 2003/2004, the 60 new bedrooms in Felsenegg were all occupied and Mather welcomed a new member to the team as house father in Juventus:

It was a great relief to have Mr. Lidgate in Juventus. He is young in spirit and has built up an excellent rapport with the students. He and Frau Speck have worked very well together and one can see the results in the way the house runs more smoothly and the atmosphere is much happier.

The family environment that defined Montana's Boarding School was exemplified in the families whose lives became intertwined with the school. Adam Lidgate was soon joined by his wife Rebecca and their first daughter was born in 2005. She spent her babyhood in Juventus, cuddled by Juventus boys in their kitchen. Peter Ngamau arrived from Kenya to teach mathematics in the International Section in 2007, and was soon joined by his wife, Elizabeth, who would work in the Primary School and then in boarding, and their two children who also spent their lives growing up on the Montana campus.

The practice favoured by Josef Ostermayer, where teachers performed some boarding duties, persisted a long time in the International Section. Anne Faassen was an exception not to have an Aufsicht commitment written into her contract when she joined as a science teacher in 1997. Joaquin Rodriguez who arrived in 2001, still looks back fondly on the experience. One night a week at Juventus and one weekend each semester he was on campus. It was when he got to know other teachers better, speaking Italian with the Italians and learning Dutch with Jelle Stegeman, and learnt more about his students. It was a practice that even Montana would soon grow out of. Even teachers have lives outside school.



Students lining up for an Ausgang from John Mather, 2004 and Mather posing with a group of visiting alumni, 2005







Rebecca, Ruby and Adam Lidgate





Peter Ngamau and Elizabeth Mang'uru

In 2007, the Student Awards celebrated John Mather with a lifetime achievement award, a heartfelt testament to the absolute loyalty he had created among generations of Montana students.

In summer 2008, he was celebrated again. But this time it was for his retirement. Oliver Schmid's Laudatio for the Head of Boarding recognised:

It is evident that John's philosophy has been to care about all the students. His kindness and good heartedness led him to be the person who never gave up on a student. John realizes, when many do not and me included, that adolescence is a difficult troubling time for many young people. Mistakes are inevitable and many who made them had John to thank for the faith he placed in them.

After 37 years, it is totally reasonable that it was time for the New Zealander to get his walking boots on and tramp across new fields as he had led those Volksmarchen all those years ago. And yet, his "retirement" was also indicative of some conflicting visions within the organisation as hinted at by Schmid in his Laudatio:

Even though we have not always seen eye to eye on every issue, I have the impression that we both respect each other. Differences of opinion are healthy, especially in such a diverse environment as ours, and I also believe we do not differ in the view that providing the students with the best possible education has been the goal that both of us share.

Montana boarding could be an exuberant sort of place. John Mather had a remarkable skill at finding that artful balance between rules and freedom, encouraging of self-responsibility and keeping the young people in his care safe without being oppressive. To summarise a former teacher: if the parents wanted the strict discipline of an English boarding school, that's what they would have chosen. Former students talk about him as consistently even-handed:

He was always fair, you always had the right to be heard, if you were punished you could always accept it. You felt bound to him.

Thus, he commanded respect while giving the students space to grow. He could adapt and change with the times but he had his values and they remained.

It was, for now, only a semi-retirement. Although no longer part of life on the Zugerberg, Mather's indefatigable energy and his deep commitment to Montana were used in his next role as Montana Alumni Relations coordinator. The real and lasting connections he had forged with his students were put to good use. Within the first few months after "retiring" he had organised and hosted club reunions in New York, Los Angeles, London and Düsseldorf. And he had only just begun.





Dr Anne Faassen and Joaquin Rodriguez



Boarding students of Felsenegg, Grosses Haus and Juventus, 2012

2008: Spotlight on Montana!

A many page feature in the *Zuger Neujahrsblatt* 2008 shone a bright light on the school on the Zugerberg. With the title - Zwischen Diddl und Dior (between Diddl and Dior) - the article was enthusiastic to cast its gaze over the more colourful aspects of the lifestyle of Montana students and the privilege of their backgrounds. And yet, its observations end up not merely appreciative but even affectionate.

The article begins by setting out the myth shared in Zug about rich kids with lots of money and impoverished brains. Then it explodes the myth.

It explains that there is a "joie de vivre" and a bit of glamour on display but there is also respectful behaviour and thoughtful, critical thinking. The journalist observes the crumbling plasterwork and dated overhead projector but then marvels at the intelligent questions flying around Werner Edelmann's science class. She is intrigued by the student whose thesis investigated the trend for absurdly huge family cars, including her own father's, which she went on to take apart as environmentally irresponsible. She spots the teachers' awareness of the students' little tricks like the "Rivella" they obtain at Vorderer Geissboden - beer in a lemonade glass. She admires the care for her charges shown by school nurse Svetlana Petkovic: *They aren't angels who live here, but completely normal children.*

The report reflects back a world of warm friendships in a cosmopolitan atmosphere. It conjures up an ambiance where the sophistication of a luxury brand next to a childish bedspread adorned with the pink mouse Diddl captures how even these (apparently) privileged children are the same as adolescents everywhere.



Primary school students all ready to attend the Fasnacht parade in Zug, 2007



Jogging past the Schattwäldli playground, 2009







Students rehearsing their music for the Christmas celebration, 2008

Also in the same year, the Montana website received a make-over that lent more focus to values. It celebrated internationalism, social responsibility and an integrated learning approach across the school.

2009

On 1st January 2009, Oliver Schmid was badly injured in a ski accident. He was never able properly to resume the role of director. We see him still, appearing in photographs of school events, but functional leadership was dispersed among other key members of staff in the expectation that he would be healed and return to full capacity. This meant that the Extended Board was, in effect, running the school while the Swiss and International Sections each continued doing their own thing.

In 2009, Dr Werner Edelmann was celebrated for 25 years of teaching biology and chemistry in the Swiss Section. His background in high level research and his passion for using science to tackle the big environmental problems influenced many cohorts of Montana Swiss Section students, as the 2008 magazine article had identified. Robert de Bruin is feted for 10 years teaching physics and Mathematics in the International Section. He and his wife Saskia, a Felsenegg house mother, are another Montana family living on campus.

The bilingual primary programme is now available to children starting in Grade 1 at the age of six and the Primary School moves to its new Pavillion.

The chef and kitchen staff are enjoying a renovated kitchen. All rooms in Juventus have been equipped with new furniture.

The Mediathek has become more than a store of books or a place to study. A series of guest readers is bringing literature alive with authors of fiction and non-fiction visiting the school to introduce and talk about their books. The space under the library is refurbished and becomes "Plato's Cave", the source of fiction in both German and English. Jean Martin Steinmann, a former student who went on to serve the school as Josef Ostermayer's assistant for many years, left in his legacy a substantial donation for the library. His impressive collection of books on Switzerland and WWII had special significance given Max Husmann's role in the surrender of the "Wehrmacht" in northern Italy in 1945.



Moving with the times: in 2008 the school updated its web presence to a cleaner, more modern look.



Dr Werner Edelmann



2010 was full of news

The "retirement" of Kevin O'Brien
Kevin O'Brien gave his last speech as Head of the International Section in June 2009. By the end of the next school year, things have changed. Graduates in 2010 were bid farewell by the new Head of International Section, Paul O'Donnell, who had taken the post at the beginning of the new school year.


Kevin O'Brien

Paul O'Donnell had previously worked at the International School of Basel. A mild-mannered, friendly Canadian, he had the depth of experience and the positive approach to maintain the strengths Montana's International Section had developed and to build on them.

Like John Mather, Kevin O'Brien was transferred to another role, becoming the college counsellor for the International Section. Also similarly, Kevin O'Brien's exit still brings a look of consternation across faces when Montana staff members from the time talk about the episode. They observe that the multitude of tasks combined in the leadership post in the International Section had become unmanageable and that some change in the organisational structure was due. And yet, especially when scrutinised from a distance as a historical sequence of events, the dynamics of internal power manoeuvring permeate its telling.



At the same time, the International Section was doing well, attracting more students, most of them boarding, IB results were improving and Montana graduates were taking up higher education opportunities around the world. And the tensions lurking beneath the decision to remove Kevin O'Brien from his role and the way it happened had nothing to do with his successor. Paul O'Donnell arrived ready to use his experience to consolidate the progress with initiatives that would strengthen the programme, as we shall see. He brought with him Matyas Philippe and Marina Le Clère, former colleagues in Basel and both of them well-experienced international school educators. An upgrade in the science Pavillion quickly followed. He opened that first speech at the 2010 International Section graduation with a dynamic energy and a sense of innovation:

When first told that being the new principal I was allowed to change some of the format of the graduation I took it at heart… Being a strong believer in collaboration my speech tonight is very pedagogical in that I have created a thread and asked three students to run with it and develop it further in their own way. Daniel Kazani, Amreet Ubhie and Armin Ruzbie have accepted the challenge and they will follow my short intro.

Project Days January 2010
The snow was magnificent, if you wanted to build a snowman. It almost cancelled the first joint section project day. Which would have been a shame.

In January 2010, a joint International Section and Swiss Gymnasium project session was organised by teachers Ana Verhar and Peter Kreutzpointner for International Section Grades 7 to 11 and Swiss Gymnasium classes G1 to G4. It was a celebration of being international in Switzerland, learning about Swiss culture and traditions with on- and off-site activities that included ice sculpting and cheese making. With almost poetic resonance, the whole event was draped in thick, soft snow that kept on falling and which created massive difficulties for transportation. But Montana teachers and students were not to be defeated by a quintessentially Swiss mountain challenge, the project was a great success and all the stories were of collaboration and laughter. The report celebrated that:

This feedback shows the wish or even need for more integration and less segregation. We hope these project days paved the way for more activities including both sections.

CIS accreditation awarded
In June 2010 Montana welcomed back the CIS to the school. The Team visit from evaluators in April/May 2009 had found a school on a concerted path of self-improvement, on its way, they said encouragingly, to becoming a great school. A number of challenges were listed and two visitors returned a year later to evaluate progress. Katja Hokkinen was delighted to be able to announce the accreditation status had been granted, an endorsement of what the school was achieving and a framework for the future.

The Bilingual Matura
2010 saw the first Montana students graduating with a Bilingual Matura after six years of studies. Ana Verhar had been appointed to lead this valiant bunch of students through the challenge at the same time as working for the IB certificate in English A2 Higher Level. Her words to honour their achievement exemplify the Montana mission to bring out the best in its students. She explained how some of them had been tested at their previous schools and classified as unable to reach the required standard to succeed at the rigorous Swiss Matura. But they came to Montana and they graduated, not only with the Matura but with the remarkable achievement of academic bilingualism validated by an IB certificate.

You along with me developed the spirit of "let's show them all what we're really capable of!", of accepting the challenge. You made Booker T. Washington's admonition to not let our grievances overshadow our opportunities a reality. No matter what I asked of you, you gave it your best try – in every sense of that word. And you know what? You made it! You have surpassed all expectations! … What Montana has given you, what you have given Montana is the confidence that yes you can make the impossible possible. Now it is time to take flight, to leave our magic mountain and bring this Montana spirit to the world! Fasten your seatbelts, ladies and gentlemen, for here comes our class of 2010.





Co-curricular and activities

Jackie Lock and Tim Jenner left in winter 2009 but a more proactive stance on providing a co-curricular programme, driven in part by CIS accreditation requirements, had become part of the Montana agenda. The next Head of Boarding, Sean Morrison, pushed the programme to become more structured as well as trying to build an environment where it was about externs as well as interns. He stayed for only a year, but his recruitment of Jamie Hill in 2009 would have lasting impact.



Jamie Hill

Hill was recruited to build a broad co-curricular programme that would offer sporting and non-sporting activities after school and at weekends. We saw a time when Montana held on to its regime of boarding school life with afternoons devoted to learning away from the formal academic programme (the sports, the woodwork, the debates, the photography). The development over the years of different ways of organising schools - day and boarding, international and Swiss programmes - within one school had resulted in divergent expectations about co-curricular provision. It is also the 21st century, the zeitgeist would never be what it was in the 1950s. It required a different approach with a new energy. By spring 2010, Jamie Hill was able to report on a great year:





Montana uniforms across many sports

This year, the activities programme has opened minds to new challenges and interests. A popular after school sports programme was complimented by the refinement of art, music and cooking, the challenge of outdoor adventure and the intellect of societies such as debating, mathemagicians and the Model United Nations. Students have performed with distinction as representatives of their school at sports events and conferences, raising the profile of Montana and the quality of students who attend.
Four trophies were won at Swiss International School sports events.
Student Councils have sat to discuss the improvement of school life.
The unique opportunity to explore the Swiss mountains and lakes has been exploited by those who went skiing, hiking, camping, canoeing and abseiling. With it, a community spirit has emerged, as students have learned the value of commitment, loyalty and teamwork.

A new Student Council constitution had been signed, an occasion that included a gourmet Grotto dining experience, and the students were ready to make their mark on life at Montana.







The signing of the Student Council constitution (Director Schmid on a slow recovery after his ski accident at the beginning of the year).

2011: Questions of leadership and ownership

Gradually, it became clear that Oliver Schmid's health was not going to recover sufficiently for him to continue as director. A replacement was sought.

Balz Müller was announced as the new director on 13th September 2010. Oliver Schmid said his farewells to the school at the beginning of 2011; Müller started work on 7th February 2011. A send-off speech from Karl Pfirter recognised Schmid's valuable skills as a bridge builder. Müller, a teacher of history and German who had held a leadership position at Lyceum Zuoz, was met by a more complex situation than he might have anticipated. During the interview process and even as he took up the post, the future ownership of Institut Montana was hanging in the balance.

Ownership is not an issue that, noticeably, impinges on the daily life of an organisation. Certainly, the students attending a school have little awareness nor probably interest in this particular subject. Rightly so. But it has an impact on where we are going next.

Institut Montana was owned by the Foundations set up by Max Husmann. Its essential character and its mission were protected by their statutes. Shareholders were, fundamentally, family and friends, many of them teachers who had been involved in Montana's new start in 1995, not running the school for a profit but out of a commitment to that character and that mission. Subsequent to the 1995 financial crisis, Beat Bernet had succeeded in securing the school's financial stability with two companies, one responsible for real estate and the other for operating the school. However, the challenge of raising funds for significant school development persisted, and Montana occupies a very desirable location. A bid came from Dulwich College International to invest heavily in the school, effectively taking over ownership and therefore Montana's future.

The decision was the responsibility of shareholders and the board of directors. They were unable to reach a consensus. In order to make progress, they set up a round table where the issues would be negotiated. Alexander Biner, himself a former student whose son was currently a Montana student in the International Section's Grade 11, joined the debate and was elected to chair the round table. Even during the recruitment process for the new director, the outcome was hanging in the balance and Balz Müller was interviewed by Dulwich College International as well as by the Montana board.



The website in 2011 with the new director and the addition of logos to show connections with the Council of International Schools (CIS), the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Swiss Learning (the organisation that promotes boarding education in Switzerland).

After months of exploring the options and their potential outcomes, the round table made its decision. Dulwich College International was told that Montana was not for sale.

In the summer of 2011, Ruedi Staechelin passed his role as Chairman of the Board of Directors to Alexander Biner. The implications of the decision to send Dulwich away were recognised in Biner's announcement to the school that Montana would remain independent:

The chosen path opens up the opportunity to shape and further develop Montana's future with our own wishes and ideas, also in the spirit of the founder. Unlike a sale, however, this path will also require a great deal of passion and commitment, be it from the management, the faculty, all employees and shareholders at Zugerberg, or from us, the alumni.

Although the investment an organisation like Dulwich could put into the school would have been attractive, there was a fundamental lack of fit. Montana had a set of values that were about staying more broadly international, nurturing individuality and maintaining a family-like atmosphere, than the Dulwich proposals would have allowed. However, turning them down shone a very bright spotlight on the need for investment. Staying independent committed the school to an energetic fundraising campaign to develop the facilities for the future.

From co-existence towards integration

A reflection of modern times - by 2011 the whole campus is smoke-free. The Mirabaud Media Centre is providing students with kindles on request, building its own website where its collections and programme of visiting authors could be consulted and creating its own Facebook page. It sees itself, Charles Hohmann explained, as acting as a bridge between the school's International and Swiss programmes by providing common resources to both sections.

It is winter 2012. Much of the school is out by the pitch to watch a soccer match with teams representing staff and students, the beginning of a ritual that would have a place in the calendar for years to come. There had been a very long-standing tradition of an annual soccer encounter between the Matura students and their Swiss Section teachers. The new initiative would broaden the reach of such a match. It was the brain wave of two teachers, Juha Leinonen and Paul Widén. While the fun of the game was of course a big driver, the purpose of the Leinonen-Widén Championship went further. It had a mission. The Championship was established, they said, to increase awareness among both students and staff that there is only one Montana.

It was Balz Müller who, recently arrived on the Zugerberg, observed that - we are not one school, but to be strong, we must be. The words infiltrated school discourse. They touched a nerve somewhere. Over the years, the Montana organisational model had developed into one of co-existence. Clearly, there are intrinsic differences between national and international education, different perceptions about education and how to do it. Such plurality can be a source of enrichment. But some of the episodes in this chapter are indicating that it can be a source of tension.



Paul-Johan Widén and Juha Leinonen



Leinonen-Widén Cup teams, 2014

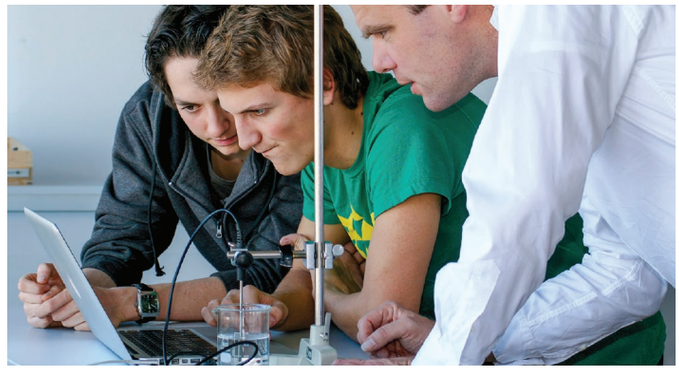
A 90th birthday around the corner
In 2012 student numbers have climbed back up to 280.

The Extended Board consists of Director Balz Müller, Karl Pfirter for the Swiss Gymnasium, Paul O'Donnell for the International Section, Giselle Mahler for the Primary School and also Head of Admissions, and Martina Nixdorf, a newly appointed Head of Boarding. On paper this would indicate cohesion and collaboration. Around the next corner, there will be more changes that suggest otherwise.

At the same time, Montana is showing its spirit. Teachers, boarding staff and students are following a school tradition of growing and learning with enthusiasm. Swiss and International Section teachers are adapting their respective curricula to Montana's distinct environment and its long history of individually focused teaching.

A strong team is emerging in boarding, even though following on from John Mather was going to be a tough act. The Head of Boarding post went through a period of instability but some long-term members of the Montana family are becoming established. Rebecca Lidgate moved from Felsenegg to Juventus in 2009 where she worked with Attila Kövári from 2011, Elisabeth Mang'uru becomes a pillar of Felsenegg, Angelique Hansen arrived in 2009.

For students, Thursday evenings down in the Grotto, a calendar of Student Council organised parties and some epic ski trips punctuate the calendar. The sense of camaraderie that has featured in everyone's Montana stories for so many years is a well-established Montana tradition.







A light moment with the faculty in 2013

A journey of true exploration
October 2012 – Ana Verhar and Winifried Pogorzelski accompanied G5 students on an epic voyage along the Croatian coast. These words not only describe the boat ride, they sum up, again, that Montana Spirit.

None of us can deny the emotions as we watched numerous sunsets, as we sang and danced together, as we argued over trivial matters, as overwhelmed by various events we cried and as comfort came unexpectedly from people we had considered strangers, as we connected and bonded with each other for the first time, as we gathered on the stern deck for stern lectures that forced us to look into a personal mirror and face consequences of reckless or spoiled behavior.

We should not forget how this changed us, how we began reflecting on our own naive actions stemming from overly sheltered lives, and how many of us resolved to become a more helpful, more mature group. We won't forget that silence in a village of only seven inhabitants beneath a starry sky in Mljet, that encouraged us to have non-electronic conversations reflecting on our expectations and choices in life.

Perhaps it was this silence that inspired us to learn to apologize and to see beyond ourselves.

Whether we have reflected on it or not, this journey has changed us. We have been schooled in life and have experienced invaluable education. Like those feet whose shoes were accidentally flung off the Tuna, leading to literally having to take many steps in someone else's shoes, we shall not tread the same paths or in the same footsteps again. For at the end of our journey, we have arrived where we started, but we now see others and ourselves differently than when we departed. We have become true explorers.
Ana Verhar





The G5 classes of Ana Verhar and Winifried Pogorzelski in Croatia, 2012

LEARNING BEYOND BORDERS

International education - the next step

Our (very brief) story of international education reached World War II. After that maelstrom of violence and hate, there was call, again, to build back differently. To strive for a world more harmonious. The imperative for education for international understanding was even more widely agreed but the ways it might be done had changed.

In 1949, Unesco convened a "Conference of Principals of International Schools" at its headquarters in Paris. It was attended by the heads of fifteen schools, including Kurt Hahn who had founded Gordonstoun in 1934 and Prince Hanover now directing Hahn's Salem College. They agreed that the project was worth pursuing and would meet regularly to share developing views.

The second conference was in March 1951, again in Paris. Representatives of nineteen schools attended, with apologies for absence from ten more (many of those were schools beyond Europe). Thirteen schools sent in short reports on their work for discussion. Dr J. Ostermayer of Montana College attended and submitted a report that was a strong endorsement of national education in an international environment, like Sauerwein's 1938 paper. The conference, however, ended with the intention to start work on a curriculum that should be shared by schools around the world. It set up a committee to take on this work.

The market for international education continued to grow in the 1950s as increasingly globalised businesses moved families around Europe and across the Atlantic. The pre-war solution of transporting national curricula around these schools was increasingly problematic and early international schools like the International School of Geneva were battling with the provision of multiple curricula.

Staff there believed that the timetabling and financial challenges of four national exams plus an American college certificate were strong arguments in favour of a different solution. Furthermore, the limitation on the number of nationalities that could be educated at one school with that system were calling the system itself into question.

The development committee compared best practices from different national models to develop a programme of study that would be free from the perceived weaknesses of the various national curricula as well as a qualification that gained entrance to many higher education options. The new programme would engage with the emerging understanding of how ethnocentric viewpoints act right across the curriculum to obscure a global perspective. By the mid-1960s they had created the International Schools Examinations Syndicate (ISES), which, in 1968, became the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO).

The subsequent growth of the IBO has been documented in many academic journals. Developed by educationalists, international curricula have transformed a previous system where school certificates, syllabi, and teacher training were under the control of national authorities and examination boards, freeing them up from the influences of local politics or perspectives on the world. We have seen the IB take its place at Montana in 1987, largely thanks to the efforts of Jelle Stegeman and then Kevin O'Brien. Since then, its acceptance by prestigious universities across the world as a gold standard for academic achievement has cemented its place in options available to aspiring students of many nationalities and a complement to Montana's Swiss programmes.

OUR PLACE TO GROW

2013 to 2026





Forward to the future:
reconnection with founding values

The motto "My Place to Grow" first saw light around 2009 or 2010. Teacher Katia Hokkinen asked a group of students about what Montana meant to them. One replied - Montana is a place to grow.

It is spring 2013

The proposals of Dulwich College International and the decision to turn them down have shone a headlight that looks forward. Rather than following a future mapped out by Dulwich, with the investment that would have been part of the Dulwich deal, Montana had chosen a path that was about self-determination. And self-sufficiency.

In the meantime, the Board agreed that a leadership change was required. The announcement to the wider school community about the future and the need for investment to move forward independently, also communicated the departures of Balz Müller, Gisella Mahler and Martina Nixdorf. Reasons behind these decisions related to the need for sound financial planning - and a desire to heal some internal tensions.

The directorship would be divided between academics and business operations. Gerhard Pfister, who had been leading the Institut Pfister in Oberaegeri, would be Academic Director. Business operations would be the domain of Nils Remmel who, a graduate of the University of St Gallen with a PhD in Management, had already been advising the board and working on Montana's new website. Head of Boarding and Rektorin of the Primary School were internal appointments: John Pfister (no relation to Gerhard), currently house father of Juventus, and Tina Zürcher. Behind this announcement, it was generally known that Gerhard Pfister had plans to move into full-time politics. His role would be to guide Nils Remmel through a learning period and then to leave him as sole director.

Within this set-up, Alexander Biner was going to be a hands-on Chairman of the Board guiding Montana along its independent path. A starting point would be to understand the values that had set the school off to its ambitious start in 1926 and to interpret them for the future. Furthermore, the funds to improve the ageing infrastructure, so crucial to Montana's capacity to attract future students, must come from somewhere.







March 2013



Alexander Biner



Gerhard Pfister and Dr Nils Remmel

Two more departures, both significant

No longer Head of the International School, Kevin O'Brien had remained on the school staff as college counsellor and then as fundraiser. Now he would leave the Zugerberg. In summer 2013, he took official retirement after 33 years of Montana. A party was held on 14th June at the Pulverturm in Zug. It was an emotional occasion. That enduring Montana spirit of life-long, multicultural friendships shone through on a warm summer evening that celebrated the warmth of Montana connections. O'Brien would move back to the United States where he and three former Montana colleagues and friends - John LaPlante, Peter Oehrlein and Ralf Ritter - would join together and set up a University Counselling Consultancy.

That summer, Charles Hohmann left after 20 years at the school. He also had plans for a productive future and one that maintained connections with the Zugerberg. He had already founded the Tutorat Aegeri that was turning out to be very successful offering a wide range of language courses for adults and young people. He would take some time to delve into Montana's history and continue contributions to its publications at the same time as to follow his dream of writing novels. And to enjoy the sunshine.

The scope of activities to entertain and to challenge students continues to broaden with the interests and commitment of teachers. Paul Widén started up a kickboxing class under the motto - "keep calm and defend yourself", teaching basic ideas of de-escalation and self-defence. John Jimenez set up and coached an American Football team, the Red Hawks, and a fencing club, Zorro.

In the International Section, CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) had become the new Travel Workshop. The Service component of the IB programme was taking students on journeys to far flung places where they would join projects that aimed to make a positive difference to a local community. In 2013, it was Tanzania, in conjunction with the International School of Bern and coordinated by the International School of Moshi. Mayas Philippe and Anne Faassen accompanied the group as they worked on renovating a primary school and planting trees on a plot of land at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro.









Pictures of school life 2013, from top to bottom:
Walking up to Felsenegg
Ice hockey
In the IT classroom in Felsenegg
Art class with teacher Brigitte Nyfenegger

2014: some musical chairs

As planned, Gerhard Pfister gave up his educational role to move into politics, leaving Nils Remmel as sole director. Katja, formerly Hokkinen now Valentino, was appointed as Academic Dean for the whole school.

After a total of 39 (non-consecutive) years - five of those were his student years - Mark Johnson took retirement from the school although not from his commitment to performance art or to living in Switzerland. In 2001, he had founded a theatre company, Strings Attached, with David Hönigsberg, composer and Montana music teacher (who would be taken by an untimely death in 2005). Its original members were Géraldine Dulex, Alice Fiedler, Salomé Golliez and Alex Hedinger – all Montana graduates and veterans of its theatre programme.

Paul O'Donnell also moved on in 2014. He had arrived at Montana with constructive ideas for modernising its practice. Prior to his arrival, there was little in the way of a documented curriculum at the International Section except for the IBDP, reminiscent of those earlier days before educational programmes became more formulaic. He introduced the International Certificate of General Education (IGCSE) and put Jamie Hill in charge of the programme. He introduced structured learning support systems that increased chances of academic success for many Montana students. He also pushed, against some opposition when it was rolled out across the school, for more time and structure for class advisor sessions. Even after he had gone, O'Donnell left behind not only a culture of, but also the mechanisms for, saving students from failure and finding their strengths so that they could shine. Academics were performing well with some impressive results when put against IBDP statistics (100% pass rate in 2015 when the global rate was 80%) and something to be proud of in a non-selective school.

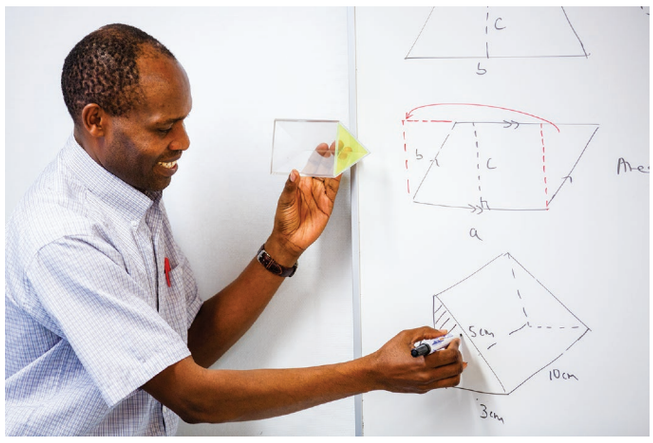
A new International School principal was appointed internally and Martin Valentino was a popular choice among staff and students. He had already taught at Montana for 15 years and could help the least literary of students to fall in love with Shakespeare (an echo of the past for those following this history). In his review of the year, he too explored that recurrent theme - change:



Mark Johnson







From top to bottom: Jamie Hill invigilates an exam in the Aula, a shared boarding room in Felsenegg, mathematics class with Peter Ngamau

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same" is the usual although not verbatim translation of the French proverb "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."

Originally coined by the nineteenth century Parisian novelist Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, I first came across it in a piece by the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, who pinched it from Karr a generation later.

The paradox is profound. We concurrently experience repetitiveness or even monotony and transformation. This is life. And it is also life that the inescapability of change cannot affect reality on a deeper level, cannot affect the essence of the thing.

Karr must have known Montana.

Change swept through Montana, especially the International School, in 2014. This is clear. The changes are obvious and need not be mentioned. Our untouched essence, however, must be surveyed. And surveyed again. We must return to it often if we are to know ourselves.

What is this essence? Is it apparent in our founder's humanist vision? Has it been duly captured in our philosophy and objectives statement? Is it visible in the corridors of our dormitories, in the breadth and delivery of our curriculum, or in our CAS activities? Do we know it as we experience each other, above all in the kindness and benevolence of our words and actions?

The inescapability of change has not affected our shared reality on a deeper level, has not affected the essence of the community we affectionately call Montana.

In his words for the International School, Valentino identified the mission for Montana if it was to keep developing, to keep growing, and to embrace positive change. The mission was grounded in looking at what the school was all about, where it lived up to its ideals, and where it didn't. Luckily, the story is heading in this direction.



Martin Valentino







From top to bottom: Chemistry class with Matyas Phillipe, Gymnasium students at the Pavillion, cross-country running on Sports Day, 2014



The Christmas musical of 2014 was the first with Guido Bissig and Marianne Walker at the helm.

A new school year: 2014 is approaching 2015

Music made a resounding comeback in 2014. This is the year when Guido Bissig joined Montana as Head of Music. Like in Stockwell's era, his choir was where students from all over the school could raise their voices together. They were set a demanding programme of performances and concerts, a showcase for talent and a motivator for students learning to play a range of instruments. Harmonies would ring out through the year culminating in a concert in the Aula on 10th June 2015, the first episode in the story of an event that will become an annual celebration of Montana music.

2014 saw the beginning of another campus improvement phase with restorations to the facade of Grosses Haus. But infrastructure repair, let alone improvement, was the constant challenge it had always been. The Board decided to introduce the first increase of the equity base since 1995 to meet these otherwise escalating demands on finance.

Renovation of the Trinkhalle was an unavoidable priority. It had been recognised as a building of historic interest, so its preservation was not optional and yet it had long been in a condition where it could be used only for storage, to which purpose it had been put by the maintenance crew. A vision for a new future for this architectural gem in the heart of the campus was starting to take shape.

In the meantime, the presence of Chairman Alexander Biner was becoming more visible. The community, including students, became used to seeing him around campus. His contributions to school publications, as Martin Valentino's speech had done, started to shift the focus back towards the values that had seen Montana through so many years and so many developments. When the decision to retain independence had been taken, responsibility for the future of the school became that of the shareholders and the board. It was turning into a mission for the chairman.

November 2014:
The first celebration of Founder's Day

As we explored Montana's history, we found that, for generations after WWII, the name Max Husmann was not widely recognised except dimly. This is about to change. The idea of Founder's Day (an initiative driven by teacher Hina Agarwalla's insights regarding value-driven international education) was about using the past to understand the present and to plan for the future. It would examine Montana's founding values and its mission and put them into the context of the 21st century.

Charles Hohmann's work was instrumental. Studying the school's past in preparation for the celebration, he recognised the progressive nature of Husmann's mission:

Dr. Max Husmann, the founder of our school, was a visionary educator. This is an attribute no one learning, teaching, or working at this school would deny. Already in 1926 he championed educational ideals like individualization, intercultural understanding, the integration of intellectual and physical activities, and immersive foreign language teaching.

Hohmann wrote and directed a dramatisation of Max Husmann's involvement in the secret plan to bring an end to World War II, Operation Sunrise, to be performed at the Founder's Day event. The programme included discussions on the part that ordinary citizens might play to help make the world a better place, and the day was made festive with songs and music.

In class advisor sessions across the school, students debated a choice of a charity that Montana would join together to promote. They selected the international organisation Médecins Sans Frontières.









Pictures of school life 2014, from top to bottom:
Students in the grotto
Gymnasium students with teacher Marco Polloni
Two against one in table football
Lunchtime 21st century style in the old Dining Hall

Into 2015: continual school improvement

Another CIS report in April 2015 confirmed that Montana could retain its accredited status. Its concluding words were an endorsement of the school's core strengths, those which helped to create that Spirit of Montana all those years ago, and a recognition of the way Montana students were growing into well-accomplished adults:

In summary, Institut Montana Zugerberg is a good school with a strong tradition and rich history. It is well led, teaching and learning is underpinned by a strong set of core values, the faculty and staff dedicated and caring, and their interactions with students meaningful, positive and mutually respectful. The student body is diverse, and the Visitors were impressed by the high regard they had for their school and their care and support for each other. Put simply, they are wonderful exemplars of the Institut Montana values.

Katja Valentino was succeeding in pulling Montana teachers from both sections into the process to work together on the schools' performance across a wide range of activities. In a further alignment with CIS guidelines, we start to see the Student Council developing, becoming more sure of itself and better supported within the school.

At the end of 2015, Karl Pfirter retired after 32 years at the school. He joined Montana as a biology teacher in 1983 and became Rektor of the Swiss Gymnasium in 2000. He had succeeded in pulling together a strong, cohesive unit in the Swiss Section, where teachers felt part of a community and well-supported by their head of section. His departure was marked by a magnificent send-off in the Pulverturm in Zug. His place was taken by Ralph Späni.



Karl Pfirter



Ralph Späni









Pictures of school life 2015, from top to bottom:
Bilingual Primary School graduation, student rock band in the Aula, teamwork on Sports Day, IS graduates of 2015

2016: Montana is 90 years old

From the very beginning of the year, the 90th birthday was calling for attention. This was something for the school to be proud of. Music, the art that had waved its magic over Montana for much of that history, would have a starring role.

Montana Classics began in January 2016. The initiative developed from the series of concerts planned for the 90 year jubilee, the brainchild of Head of Music Guido Bissig with music teacher Marianne Walker. Appropriately, the Zugerberg was shrouded in a blanket of snow while the Aula rang with tunes from Schumann, Brahms and Lachner. At the next concert in June, Alexander Biner could announce:

Montana Classics vastly enriches cultural life on the Zugerberg and, for a short moment, if unintentionally, transposes the visitor into another world. On such an evening especially, the Zugerberg is indeed a "Zauberberg" - our magic mountain.

There was a new beginning for the Montana Summer School. A regular feature of the Montana year since its earliest history, Summer School seemed to fade away. As with many of these things, it is difficult to find out exactly when it stopped - there are rarely announcements in school records of the ends of things, only of the beginnings. For some years, the premises had been rented out during the long vacation, most recently to the Astona International Music Academy. But 2016 saw the re-inauguration of the Montana Summer School under the banner Summer Sessions and led by the Head of Community Relations, Velia Tricoli, herself a former student.



The first Montana Classics performance in 2016



Summer fun at Montana was relaunched in 2016.

Scenes from the Whitsuntide gathering, 2016











90 years - almost 100!
A milestone that begs for a moment's pause to reflect. A "why are we here?" kind of moment, in anticipation of that centenary. Those big hopes on which the school was set up resonated in another Martin Valentino speech at the 2015/2016 IS graduation:

Imagine: More than 60 million refugees – roughly equivalent to the population of the UK– were displaced from their homes last year alone, compared to 40 million in the aftermath of the Second World War. (The Washington Post)
Imagine: Fewer than a dozen countries in the world are currently at peace; the others are currently involved in some form of conflict. (The Independent)
Imagine our students on the Zugerberg, steeped in the values of our tradition, making a difference in a world desperately in need of change.
Imagine… It's easy if you try.

Founder's Day in November explored the mission further. Montana was visited by Holocaust survivor Judita Schlesinger who had been one of the children who recuperated on the Zugerberg in summer 1946. An interview and presentation written and conducted by Ana Verhar included slides that made a point significant to reflection on the story of the refugee children on the Zugerberg. The sanctuary was not a Montana initiative nor connected in any way with Max Husmann. It was the Red Cross that brought the children and it was the work of one remarkable woman, Charlotte Weber, that helped heal their emotional wounds. Weber, along with the magic of the mountain, wafted their wands of health. However, the humanitarian values behind the refugee programme are those that Montana aspires, as also reflected in Valentino's words, to teach.

As part of the celebration, Guido Bissig composed a Montana anthem, Montana - My Place to Grow. It was performed by the school choir of 80 students aged 11 to 19, and a live orchestra, at the Church of St Michael in Zug to an audience of over 500 people. They went on to repeat the performance in a studio and made a recording of the Montana anthem.

The year closed with more music at a concert that merged Zug and Argentina - voices, violins and a small orchestra conducted by Guido Bissig. "Misa Tango – Misa a Buenos Aires" was performed at both St Michael's Church in Zug and the St Laurentius Parish Church in Triengen.



On Founder's Day 2016, Judita Schlesinger was the guest of honour.







Above: recording "My Place to Grow" in a recording studio
Below: performing "Misa Tango" in 2016



It is October 2017
Victory at last for the staff team in the now biannual Leinonen-Widén Championship, as reported by captain of the winning team, Anthony Shelley:

It was a long time coming… There has been sweat, there has been blood spilt, there have even been torn muscles and broken limbs… But finally the staff team has persevered… And has overcome all odds to win the Leinonen-Widen Championship.....
Mr Widen had his best ever game in the tournament and athletically stopping crucial, impossible shots to the heartbreak of the student team.
Mr Hill, harping back to his own youthful schoolboy days, was a stalwart defender unwavering and resolute.
Mr Koevari (a.k.a. Mr Attila) was composed in his control on and direction of the ball.
Hr Suter who was a wonderful left-footed deputy for Dr Remmel in defence, and not letting anyone through.
Mr Leinonen who scored and whose commitment was unparalleled, so much so, he sprained another muscle and had to come off!
Hr Späni who did not put one foot wrong at the back.
Mr Rodgriquez who displayed great skill and passing on the ball in defence and midfield reminiscent of his former glory; and finally - Mr Barche (a.k.a. Mr Martin) who in the centre of midfield was superb with his fitness, energy, passing, scoring, running and control - the students could not match in this area. Mr Barche was definitely the Man of the Match.


The players of the Leinonen-Widén Cup, 2017







The first Montana Model United Nations conference, 2017

In November, Montana hosted its first Model United Nations conference on the Zugerberg. More than 50 students from more than 20 different nations debated two topics: "Developing opportunities for women" and "The preservation of freedom of speech". It was the first of many to come.

2018 and the "temporary" director
In spring 2018, after six years on the Zugerberg, Nils Remmel left Montana (he moved to Portugal with his family) and it was decided that Alexander Biner would step in as an interim while a future director was sought. A year, perhaps, to ensure someone with the experience to take up Montana's rather complicated reins could be found. It would turn out, for a combination of reasons, somewhat longer than that.

Now that Husmann's work was better understood, the new director saw the opportunity to reaffirm the founding values with the addition of a 4th pillar. Montana's mantra became: Internationalism, Integration, Individualism and - Innovation. The times were changing fast and, to continue to be relevant for the modern world, Montana had to stay progressive.

A Bilingual Secondary School

August 2018. Ready for the beginning of the next school year on campus is the Bilingual Secondary School (BSS) - Zweisprachige Sekundarschule. It is an innovative and thoroughly Montana solution to the transition between primary and secondary education and the different paths its students could choose between. Some might move on to the Gymnasium and others to the International School, with ambitions for a Swiss Matura or an International Baccalaureate. A third option might be a vocational path at the end of Secondary School.

The BSS would act as the bridge from primary education towards whichever direction the individual student aspired. With the curriculum taught in German and English and extensive support options, students would reach a high level of proficiency in both languages. Teaching methods would be innovative, encouraging independent learning and seeing teachers as supportive coaches providing individual guidance through the programme. It was an approach that was exciting for the teachers too, attracting an enthusiastic team led by Nicolas Magaldi.

Founder's Day 2018 was an explosion of colour. Students and teachers dressed in the traditional dress of their homelands from across the globe. The day culminated in the magnificent expression of joy that is the Hindu Holi festival and the celebration of the triumph of good over evil.









Scenes from an internationally-themed Founder's Day, 2018

2019: The calm before the storm

A new Principal for the International School, Michael Gwerder, and a new Head of Student Life, Julia Carlsen, are both going to play significant roles in a drama that is soon to unfold.



Michael Gwerder

In the meantime, the next cycle of the CIS re-accreditation programme brought the development of a set of Guiding Statements that used Max Husmann's founding principles, framed them for the 21st century, and set out how they guided school practice. Feedback from the CIS was gratifying. It was also insightful and prescient:

With nearly a century of storied history, the institution created by the IMZ (Institut Montana Zugerberg) founder, Dr. Max Husmann, holds a special place in the hearts of past and present students. Coming onto the Zugerberg campus and entering classrooms, a visitor is immediately aware IMZ is an inviting place where self-confident students are engaged in their learning in multiple languages and curricula, enshrined in the omnipresent Montana Spirit. ..... The team found decisions are generally made with student learning and welfare at the forefront, and the adults in the community understand the role of the students existing at the centre of the school universe. The adults also recognise their obligation to the safety of the children.....





Time together in the autumn of 2019

A CIS accreditation covers many aspects of school life beyond teaching and learning, and one of them is safety. This required answering the question: What would you do in the event of a campus evacuation? Would the school be able to carry on? Thanks to recent school improvement (and conscientious work carried out by Julia Carlsen, then responsible for Montana's health and safety), Montana could describe robust safety measures in answer to that question. At the time, the question seemed hypothetical. It turned out to be very real.

The Montana Review

It was planned to be the first in a series of large-scale musical projects to be performed at the Casino Theater Zug once each three years. It would be the opportunity for Montana students and staff to perform on a large stage in front of a public audience. The first "Montana Review" magnificently joined together music and drama at the Zug theatre on the 18th of October and it received a massive applause. Inspired, Guido Bissig and his choir travelled to Triengen to perform "West Side Story" on the 17th of November. Montana's youngest children at the Elementary School (now Primary) performed at Zürich's Singing Christmas Tree event on the 24th of November and followed it up with a Christmas musical, "Nicholas - The Bishop of Myra". It was the last performance anyone would be involved in for quite some time.





Performing at Casino Theater Zug, 2019

It is 2020

The school year had started as normal and, even after Christmas, few suspected that the clouds that were gathering somewhere over China were going to blow across the world. Nor how quickly. The Primary School went to Davos and skied several days under blue skies.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was hard to imagine until it happened. The repercussions for international boarding schools, whose existence had developed from human beings travelling across their planet and coming together for the purpose of learning, would bring special challenges.

From the director's office, Montana was watching. By the time the virus travelled from China and arrived in Italy on the 31st of January, it was a discussion point at every weekly leadership meeting. As the threat and its ramifications drew closer and became clearer in February, Montana leadership was making plans. During the first week of March, decisions were made and on Wednesday 11th March it was announced that the whole school would switch to distance learning the following week. Thursday and Friday would be devoted to bringing all staff up to speed with the skills they would need to minimise any damage to student learning.

On Friday 13th March, the Swiss Federal Council said that all schools in Switzerland must close the following Monday. Montana was ready.

Those two days were intense. The IT department had only recently, and fortuitously, upgraded systems that had to hurtle instantaneously into top gear. Digital platforms were prepared, materials organised, and, on 16th March, Montana was doing digital learning without a glitch in the timetable. Even extracurricular activities found themselves going virtual, with sports quizzes and happiness workshops, creating a sense of community that helped to nurture staff and students through those weeks of isolation. A highlight was Montana's first ever online theatrical performance. A group of IS students learning English as an additional language, directed by teacher Hina Agarwalla, performed Act 2 of Shakespeare's "Othello" from their separate homes. There was a virtual audience of parents and teacher Simone Burban and a well-deserved round of applause.

Many boarders had returned to their families while travelling was still an option and would join the virtual classroom from homes all over the world. But for some of the students trapped in Switzerland by travel restrictions, school had to become their home during the entire Easter break.



The school's website during the Covid pandemic era



Remote primary school reading lesson with teacher Michele Göttler-Gambino



An invitation for an online student theatre performance of "Othello", 2020



All necessary health and safety precautions were in place and respected, with dedicated houseparents ensuring that there were activities to keep everyone happy and healthy for their vacation. Anxiety levels were understandably high and the hard part for those houseparents was not being able to lean over and hug a child who was missing their family.

It was a time of uncertainty. For a while, no one knew for how long the precautions would have to linger. But, from 18th May and into June, there was a gradual return to in-person classes, dependent on strict adherence to all the regulations about masks, distancing and the ubiquitous aroma of disinfectant. Online learning for everyone turned to hybrid learning, an innovative version of video conferencing via a small camera and microphone set on top of a big TV screen. Admissions went digital. Students around the world who were unable to travel back to Switzerland could join their classmates and teachers on the Zugerberg to share lessons together.

The Class of 2020 had to meet the challenge of studying for Maturas and IBs through the crisis, taking virtual exams and attending online graduation ceremonies. While the culmination of all that hard work - graduation parties - had to be skipped, the resilience and achievement of the Class of 2020 should go down in history.

The words of Julia Carlsen who, as Head of Student Life, had a lot to do with Montana's exemplary Covid response, captured the mood:

The school year of 2019-2020 will not be defined by what we lost to this virus, but by how we responded to it. We were no longer simply a school; we became one big family that supported and helped each other in ways that we never imagined possible.



Faculty and boarding staff just 12 days before the start of the Covid lockdown in Switzerland, March 2020



Remote primary school lessons – Martha Redeker's class virtually together on screen

School year 2020 to 2021

A new school year began at the end of August 2020 but the pandemic waves still beat against society worldwide and would spill over and wash up against 2021. As 2020 drew to a close, there were around 20 boarding students who had not been able to return to their homes all year. Although the missing of homes and parents was painful for many of these young people, caring staff made a difference including chef Giona who took the time to prepare a special Christmas lunch on the day.

2021 was another year of uncertainty and fear. A year of masks and distancing and a bewilderingly fluid situation regarding restrictions. But the beauty of the systems that Montana developed in 2020 was their flexibility. It was a year in and out of hybrid learning, digital admissions, delivery of lunches across the campus, and video-linked parent-teacher conferences. It was a year when everyone did a lot of growing and learnt to communicate via smiling eyes above the masks.

The best snow on the Zugerberg for fifteen years reopened sledging opportunities loved by previous generations of Montana boarders and, after the snow had melted, hiking on the Zugerberg made a comeback. With restrictions on free time activities, bonding within the boarding houses was strong and cooking was a popular choice among students who found time for new hobbies. Excursions stayed within borders but had the richness of Switzerland to explore. Skiing in Disentis, kayaking, canyoning, marvelling at the Jungfrau but not at the Matterhorn which was swathed in mist for the two days' visit to Zermatt.

Music was on hold for a long time, but, by June 2021, the primary school could perform a summer musical, albeit without an audience. A film of the event was sent to parents. The Institut Montana Model United Nations (IMZMUN) went on, joining online conferences and holding debates on campus. Many feared that graduation celebrations would, again, be impossible. But restrictions loosened in time for ceremonies and dinners, more subdued than in previous years and with a limited number of guests. It was an opportunity to honour the students who had demonstrated such resilience and positivity during their challenging closing years of school.





From top to bottom: Sledging, Collaborating with an online classmate, Hybrid classroom with Hina Agarwalla, All in the same boat





2022: Refound freedom

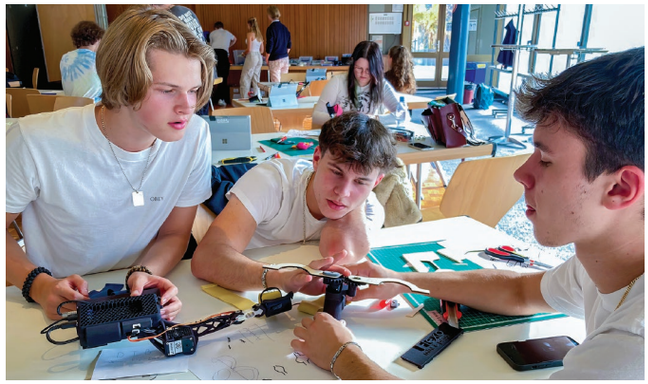
That joy that prevails when freedoms return. There was still a lot of health and safety protocol to take care of, forms to fill. But lunch is back in the dining room again, masks are left at home. The choir can sing in unison once more. Visitors and prospective students can be shown the delights of the Zugerberg and the Model United Nations hosts another conference. And a post-Covid boost to confidence and pride in the school that weathered the storm - applications to Montana are high, school numbers are on the up.

The outbreak of war as Russian troops invaded Ukraine in spring 2022 had repercussions for a community like Montana's. There were significant cohorts of students from both countries, now at war, best friends trying to make sense of conflict and of tragedy while payment of school fees was impacted by currency embargoes. There were inevitable tensions along the corridors of a school like Montana. But those values that brought the school into existence could help find light through the dark with memories of a founder who set up a school to teach against nationalistic aggression. Those words of the holocaust survivor on rising above hate were recent. As director, Alexander Biner had to show guidance, as in this speech from that year reflecting on how to confront conflict:

I found the framework used by the Red Cross to be a helpful guide. Their principles are fundamentally humanitarian. The Red Cross provides support and relief where it is needed irrespective of national, religious or political divides.
We shall do the same and encourage our students to remember that we are friends and colleagues no matter where we were born.
Our school on the Zugerberg is a place of emotional support, intellectual development and safety, for all our students.
What do we do as a school-community?
We will live up to our founding values and make sure that each of you feels safe and comfortable on the Zugerberg.
We will strive for mutual understanding, mutual respect, tolerance and, also, forgiveness.
We will put these ethics at the centre of our assemblies, student council, intercommunity committee, history lessons, etc.
They will be part of our daily life.



Learning to paddleboard

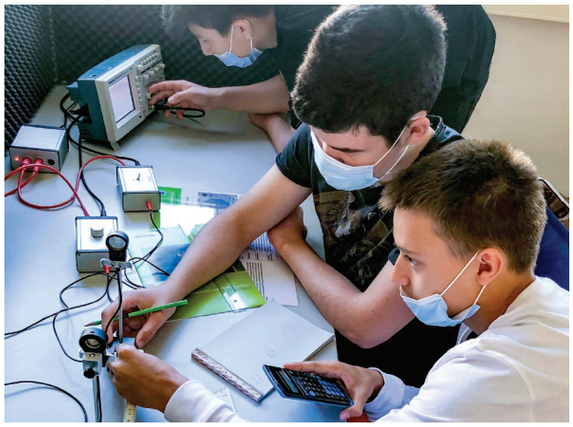


Gymnasium 6 students studying robotics



Breaktime for the BPS students

The early 2020s - from restrictions and masks to freedom regained



Above: 2021 – Studying physics
Below: Indoor climbing with Jeannine Abt, and an online and audience-free live performance of “The Wizard of Oz”







BSS students and their newly-constructed “Lebensturm” (habitat tower), 2023



When in Rome – Gymnasium 1 & 2 students on tour 2023



BPS students learning about ancient Egypt, 2023

The Zugerberg and zoning

While it was concerted human effort that powered Montana through this exceptional period in its history, location was a significant advantage. Montana is the owner of a glorious campus. It has beauty, it is health-giving and it has space. It served as a safe haven for refugees displaced by war in the 1940s and later for students trapped by a deadly virus. However, what could be done with it to serve the school and to assure its future depended on the City Parliament of the Commune of Zug. They would take fifteen long years mired in cumbersome politics to decide if the school could make concrete (literal as well as figurative) decisions for its future. That decision was now due and yet repeatedly stalled.

But the Trinkhalle and the Chalet were both in need of urgent repair. While awaiting the Canton's verdict on the big picture, the school had applied for permission to restore these crumbling buildings and to build a Pavillion for the BSS fit for its modern teaching methods. The applications were accepted; work had begun. In 2021, the BSS could move from its first home in Juventus to take up temporary residence in the partially renovated Chalet. However, there were ambitious further plans for the transformation of that iconic wooden structure that greets everyone alighting from the Zugerbergbahn (ZBB) top station. The project would transform the former Swiss exhibit at a Milan trade show, now over 100 years old, into a hub for 21st century learning.

The plans reflect an insight from Patrick Odermatt, former Montana student, leader of the Montana Club and then member of the Board. He described the school as a young soul in an old body. Those old buildings were graceful emblems of the past, they told a story, and the natural environment in which they stand is precious. The Montana community is a steward taking care of this legacy.



2023: Stability for the 21st century
Stability is important but can hinder healthy change. By adopting Innovation as its 4th Pillar, Montana pledged to remain fresh, exciting and open to new ideas.

The BSS moves into a new Pavillion fit for its innovative approach. The Chalet becomes a beacon for the future with state-of-the-art learning, offering creativity and technology, 3D printing, digital photography and greenscreen digital film shooting, design software as well as a yoga studio. Like the Trinkhalle (also known as the Ostermayer Welcome Center), now stylishly functional with offices and meeting rooms, it was transformed from a building suffering the fragility of accumulating years with creaky beams and rotting foundations into shiny and yet sensitive modernity thanks to contributions from stakeholders in Montana - parents, alumni, friends and family.

The development of a Care Department is another adaptation to a modern world of education where the connections between personal development and intellectual growth, along with schools' responsibilities for the wellbeing of the young people in their care, have become well established.

Montana moved decisively on from that era when its IT lagged behind with slow acquisition of hardware and sluggish connectivity. Its present systems are swift and managed by well-trained IT technicians. But the impact of technology, especially AI, on teaching and learning is a massive question that challenges education and students' futures. Michael Meier, now Head of the International Baccalaureate Diploma and High School Diploma programmes, brought it into his June 2023 graduation send-off:

In a world that is in constant flux, a focus on skills and critical thinking, on community service and creativity, rather than the accumulation of knowledge that may or may not be obsolete sooner than later, is as future-proof as an educational philosophy can be. Finding new creative answers to unfamiliar problems by thinking outside of the box and building strong and resilient communities to build the world of the future is something that AI cannot and will likely never be able to do - it can only match old ideas to categories that it has encountered before. What a student needs to learn in the 2020s is to transcend that and do what only a human being can do.







From top: 2023 – The Pavillion Schönfels, the Chalet Suisse, the Trinkhalle, also known as the Ostermayer Welcome Center



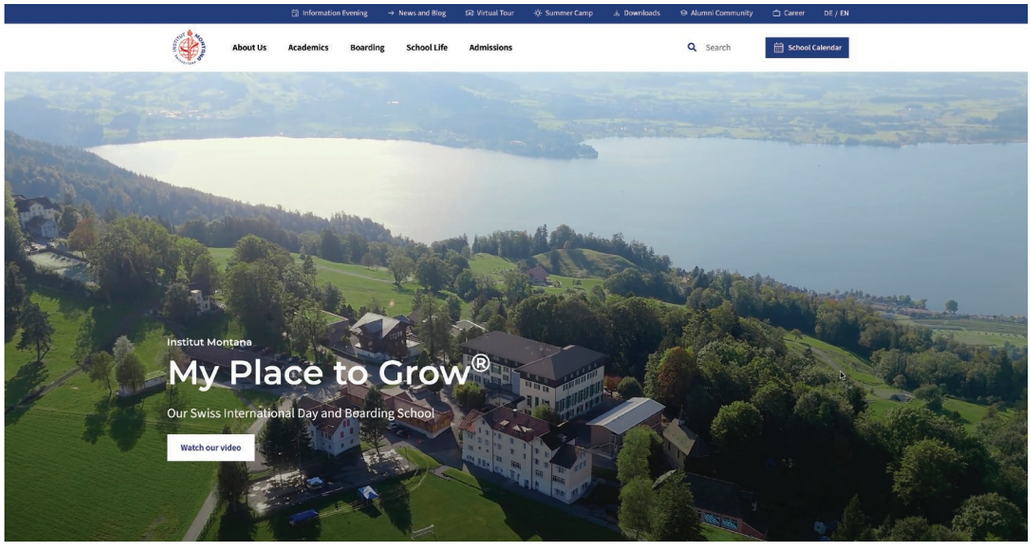
Michael Meier

September 2023. A new leadership structure has been put into place. Its goals are to achieve stability by ensuring smooth operations but, at the same time, avoid the calcification of staying still. Operational management of the school was given to a collective leadership team of three senior staff: Franziska Welti as Director of Education, Care and Boarding; Athanasios Theotokatos as Director of Business Operations; and Marco Pletscher as Director of Campus Operations. Academics would be led by the six Heads of Programme. Alexander Biner would continue as Chairman of the Board, no longer director involved in day-to-day operations, but it was anticipated (and it turned out) that he would be a very active chairman in charge of the school's overall purpose and direction as well as future development plans. In September 2023, the Parliament of the Commune of Zug finally voted on the Zugerberg question. The result was 39 votes for and none against Montana being allowed to develop its infrastructure for the school of the future. With certain criteria, of course, for meeting environmental requirements for the 21st century.





Above: The view of the city from the Zugerberg, 2023.
Left: The Senior Leadership Team: Athanasios Theotokatos, Franziska Welti and Marco Pletscher
Below: The reassessment of Montana's value-driven education inspired a new website, launched in 2024.



2024 and 2025

And yes! The last two years have seen stability that is seasoned by dynamism. The series of musical events every year, the flourishing Montana Model United Nations, both with great participation rates. The active Student Council organising events and canvassing student opinions and taking views to leadership who are prepared to listen and respond. Strong academic results. Wide-ranging sports options that make use of the amazing surroundings. A focus on ensuring the emotional health of Montana's young people and helping them to meet the challenges of this demanding world. Boarding houses that are a warm-hearted home away from home where students from all over the world grow into adults with self-responsibility and kind hearts. High levels of health and safety. And, above all, teachers teaching according to Montana's long-cherished value system that puts thinking first. Spiced up, as is a long-lasting Montana tradition of the best sort, with that sense of joy. A lot of laughter, the occasional creative interpretation of the rules, warm relationships and a sense for fun.

In its recent reaccreditation, the CIS recognised Montana's determination, mirrored in what it asks of its students, to strive for its best.

The school's programmes remain strong, and the school environment retains an open, warm, supportive culture for all. It is an impressive institution, and the organisational commitment to improvement is to be commended..... IMZ is sound, and a well-run school. It has set a clear path forward and is committed to improvement.
March 2025





Above left: At the MUN conference, 2024
Above right: At the Singing Christmas Tree in Zürich, 2024



Performing "Alice in Wonderland", 2025



Above: BSS students and faculty at the end of the schoolyear, 2024
Right: Swiss Gymnasium students and faculty during Motto Week, 2024



It is 2026 and Montana is almost 100 years old

As we observed at the beginning of this chapter in the story of Montana's first 100 years, recent history is different to the more distant past. Further back, we were exploring a curious old attic where the light is dim. A layer of dust blurs the lines in a place of shadows and whispers but we can brush it away and see more clearly what is there underneath. You find an old box - is it intriguingly full of broken toys? Or of treasure whose golden glow will light up a forgotten world?

Now we are dealing with current affairs. There will have been parts of this winding up of the final chapter that are simply describing day-to-day life in the here and now. Be patient with that. For this is also a story for future Montaners (that old word so loved back in the 1930s). For them it might be a history - who knows what will have changed when they come to turn these pages?

As Montana approached its 100th birthday, we listened to some people who know the place quite well - they had all worked at the school for most of this final chapter of the book. Their thoughts add layers to the written sources. And, when we look attentively even today, we can see themes emerging. They must be treated with care but we would be neglecting our job of exploring if we were to ignore them. They might be of use as we forge a way into the final, concluding, chapter.



BPS students performing "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory", 2025









From top: 2025 – Ribbon-cutting for the anniversary-themed Zug city bus, chess in the Chalet with Michael MacNaughton, Spanish with Joaquin Rodriguez, Montanopoly in the Mediathek

A changing student population

When Montana staff talk about these years, we hear reflections on how changing demographics impact on the school. It was a period that saw a swing from high numbers of students from newly prosperous families in Russia and other Eastern European countries towards students from Asia whose parents have high expectations for an education in Switzerland and the university options that would open up. From cohorts of students who were big characters with lots of enthusiasm for sports the ambiance shifted. The new market sought academic focus and good results and brought with it a level of voluntary discipline that hadn't existed before. Teachers adapted. They were, they say, inspired by the challenge.

The reasons for the fluctuations are all about global politics and economics but also fashion. Switzerland did a good job of selling itself into the Asian market as an intellectual hub for new industries growing in a world dominated by technology, exemplified by the ETH. We see students travelling across oceans to Montana to study for a Swiss Matura with precisely that goal. At the same time, overreliance on one part of the world as a source for students can be dangerous, especially for so small a school. As one teacher said: When the Ruble dropped and we had all those Russian students we really felt it. As well as economic, the danger is also upsetting the multicultural mix that was part of Montana's DNA from its earliest years. Recruitment efforts focused on retaining a diverse student population, targeting countries in South and Central America for example, are an ideological as well as an economic safety net.

Other school demographics have changed in this period and day students are no longer the exception they were before. Furthermore, the provenance of those day students, Zug and its surroundings, has itself changed, with an increasingly international resident population. Some of those families might seek a school that offers the International Baccalaureate, perhaps because of its educational philosophy, the global passport of its qualification or for continuity if the family moves again. Others might seek a Swiss education better to integrate with their adopted home. It will be Montana's special qualities especially for those families - its international environment and success with language teaching, its family-like atmosphere, its life beyond the curriculum - that provides that pull to ascend and descend daily between Schönegg to the school on the Zugerberg.





Above: Día de los Muertos with Ana Somalo, 2024, Halloween Party, 2025



The city of Zug, the Zugersee and the Zugerberg, 2025



Two schools in one?

Offering two programmes thus has its advantages but also its potential hazards. Over our history we have observed development that has allowed, encouraged even, organisational separation between sections. The sense of otherness was there even before multiple sections changed to Swiss and International programmes but voices from recent years talked a lot about separateness.

A report jointly written by Gerhard Pfister and Nils Remmel in 2014 suggests they were battling with internal dissonance. They looked back on the problems of initiating change that had been encountered that year:

Clearly, one does not always succeed in making sense of new developments to everyone; this seems to be in the nature of change…

They strove to be diplomatic but we can speculate between the lines. Their words corroborate other stories from the time when proposals bounced against views on education and ways of doing things that conflicted with each other and initiatives were differently met in different parts of the school. We hear stories of competing for students, for staff, for budgets, and even the nice classrooms. A salary imbalance inherited from a previous era did not help. The sense of collegiality between the sections that was critical for the healthy functioning of its organisational model had been subject to erosion. There were voices from all parts of the school striving against this tendency but it was built into the model and then exacerbated by some of the conditions of the times.

But now, as we tumble down these last years, a change is happening. The period when Admissions was handed over to two teachers, one from each section, was noted as building an improved sense of a shared purpose. Two very competent individuals, Anne Faassen and Eva Maurenbrecher, brought in assessment procedures that worked for each section and that would impact on the positive ways that the department has grown and developed since. Moving on, regular meetings between programme leaders where they talk about the specifically Montana issues that they share, such as attention to the individual learner, were identified as a positive step forward, building trust as well as mutual understanding. The concept of the Montana Learning Experience developed and it is an exciting statement that drives that shared purpose of the student-centred method that is quintessentially Montana across all its programmes.

Among teachers who have stayed at the school for many years (and there are many) it was not only about formal meetings. Memories of a time when John Mather was there bringing staff together for informal gatherings that served as a uniting factor, were relived. And others, of teachers heading out to get together at a Chinese restaurant on a Friday night or of dressing up for Thanksgiving, no longer about being American but as an excuse for a bit of a party, staff and students together. Those times, that had waned even before Covid restrictions, were missed, and the recent inauguration of an annual staff boat party has been welcomed. In an environment where separation has, at times, led to segregation, integration starts to glow as a very important pillar among those founding values.



The Zugerbergbahn as seen through a telephoto lens from the middle of the Zugersee, 2025

Boarding for the modern world

From its beginnings, Montana pinned its internationalism and its integration on being a boarding school. Students and teachers lived at school, dined together and shared activities, sports and excursions in multicultural groups.

Schooling has changed and Montana with it. Now, the boarding/day school mix is far more prevalent especially in international schools around the world. At Montana, the privilege of its location surrounded by nature and yet with easy access to the city has made it the quintessential boarding/day school.

This last chapter in the school's 100 years shows how Montana boarding has held on to its roots. The John Mather legacy, shaped by his insightful understanding of adolescence and how to deal well with its adventures, has been preserved. But now, the elements that meet the requirements of professionalised boarding provision in the modern world have been added to the mix. They have led to a high level of well-informed care although houseparents often find that their administrative duties can distract from the real part of the job, their daily care for their students.

Official languages are English and German but English becoming the preponderant community language goes back a long way, reflective of international education in general and of conditions in the wider world. It has not brought with it the homogenisation that was feared in the 1930s. Boarding houses are multicultural, polyglot communities where diversity is celebrated and national festivals an excuse for sharing delicacies from across the world. Rules about language, as explained by houseparents, are based on courtesy:

When there's a bunch of Chinese kids in the kitchen of course they talk Chinese. But as soon as I see a Turkish or a Russian guy there, I will ask them to change to English so they don't feel left out.

You have tables where they are all mixed up, six nationalities getting on together. The main language is English then. It's natural they sometimes have their groups but we remind them to speak English if there is someone there who doesn't speak Chinese say. We remind them be mindful, who is there.

The idea of boarding life being a home away from home is far more pronounced in the 21st century than in times gone by. Those words were used in the past, but life at home has changed significantly too.







Boarding at Grosses Haus

The era of putting your shoes outside of the door to have them polished by morning, of taking every meal in the dining room served by uniformed staff, are long since gone. Now, learning to cook for yourself and your friends is an integral part of life in all the boarding houses. It would have been inconceivable not that long ago.

Music, as we have heard, has rung across the boarding houses throughout their history. It has been the tunes, the beat and the lyrics changing with the times.
But this period has seen a small but significant development. Headphones. While potentially lowering the ambient volume, a blessing some would say, they change the dynamics of a situation and have created a new challenge for houseparents to navigate.

These magical communication devices relate to a reason why some parents, boarding staff observe, are finding a renewed attraction towards boarding education. It offers a context where young people are surrounded by their peers every day, where free time means going outside to kick a football or to find a quiet corner for a long chat with your besties, rather than submitting to the temptation of the screen scroll.
For the parent, it is where someone else has to control screen time.





Boarding at Felsenegg



What stands out when you come away from talking to Montana houseparents is a deep sense of care. Now we have travelled through Montana's history, we can see how it has shone even at times when it was unfashionable, almost disapproved of in some residential school contexts. It goes right back, via the teachers who found themselves doing Aufsicht, massively influenced by the presence of John Mather, through the many members of staff who themselves lived on campus when that was normal, and all the way over a whole century back to Frau Maria Gutstein.

As a current houseparent said:

Behaviour? It's just teenagers being teenagers, trying to find themselves, finding the balance, trying things out. As long as they are not doing substance abuse, we should be happy. If they are loud in the house, we are fine with that.





Boarding at Juventus



Teachers

Leadership gives shape to a school, how it approaches education and what that means for its practice. But, for the students, those people for whom the school is there in the first place, the teachers shape their experience. The teachers are the people they remember after the graduation good-byes and last ride down on the funicular. And then it is the teachers (and houseparents for the boarders) they are excited to see when they next get on that Bahn and come up for a visit.

A golden thread has run throughout Montana's 100 years and it is about teaching. Belief in a pedagogic relationship that is warm, constructive, empathetic and supportive has been in evidence down the years. The circumstances that allowed close attention to each student's learning with individually designed programmes, and the possibility to swap in and out of classes according to individual rates of progress, disappeared long ago. Learning programmes have become structured in ways that preclude such fluidity except in a few alternative schools. However, teaching that caters for each child's individuality remains a hallmark of Montana learning. And, for many of today's Montana teachers, it is a motivation to stay on the Zugerberg.

The Montana classroom is a diverse place. In a small group of students, there is a multiplicity of first languages and a wide range of aptitudes. The teachers we spoke to are inspired by the challenges of teaching in this environment:

The diversity of students helps the teachers to grow, it's always a challenge, we become better... It makes us more creative.

The Montana community, like the Montana classroom, is also diverse. Time has moved on and international education is understood as more than a question of community. National as well as international programmes are teaching an international perspective at the same time as celebrating the richness of cultural diversity. Teachers from both Montana's sections have been adopting this perspective, it aligns well with Montana's founding values. The initiative, driven by Hina Argawalla, to spread education for international understanding across the school is finding shared ground. Her Intercultural Committee was that early Club for International Understanding revamped for the 21st century!



The faculty of the Bilingual Primary School, 2026



The faculty of the Bilingual Secondary School, 2026



The faculty of the International School, 2026



The faculty of the Swiss Gymnasium, 2026

The tradition of warm relationships between staff and students allows them to get to know each other well and learning (as Pestalozzi advocated) is enhanced. Teachers who have moved to Montana from other schools comment on the genuine interest and openness between staff and students. They feel they have the freedom and time to dedicate individualised support to help their students really understand what they are learning and why. And this confidence that their teachers are there for them, as one teacher commented, is fundamental to that Spirit of Montana. Of course, it takes a special sort of teacher who is fired up by this environment. As one of them said - *it's about passion, we need the enthusiasts*. An ongoing concern expressed by faculty is the tendency towards replacing passion with operations and replacing learning to think with learning how to use AI tools.

After talking to Montana students and their teachers, a quality shared across Montana's faculty became clear. It takes talent to motivate people and if you have high expectations of your students, you have to be a bit extraordinary yourself. As a former Swiss Section student said:

I can still remember why lakes die, my teacher had such graphic explanations. There were teachers who challenged the Swiss system, for example, using their own grade system as it was more motivational. It inspired us to be extraordinary. To do things differently. The small classes help you to learn critical thinking, you can't hide like in a large class at a public school. Then you talk and get involved and you believe in yourself.

It takes us back to where we started. Montana's fundamental values regularly came up in conversations with teachers. And, as Ana Verhar put it, you come to Montana because of them:

Montana didn't make me the person I am. I joined the school because our values matched. Then, the school gave me the freedom to live those values and to shape students and myself, and thus, perhaps, the school too.

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"THE END IS WHERE WE START FROM"

And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place...
From the last stanza of T. S. Eliot's final Quartet, Little Gidding

The last chapter in our chronology closed with an overview of day-to-day life, Montana, 2026. After a lot of exploring, we have arrived back where we started and we know the place pretty well.

Over the journey of exploration some themes emerged through the telling, rather like the analytical process of a qualitative research project. It was not a difficult task to extract them from the story. They shone brightly, claiming attention. Together, they define Montana.

In essence, Montana is:

Living in harmony with tolerance and mutual consideration. Learning from a multiplicity of cultures and of languages, building connections across borders. Respecting the psychology of learning (warmth of pedagogic relationship, motivation through interest, understanding learners as individuals). Intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. A sense of fairness and a love for nature. Preparing young people for their future by helping them to grow into well-integrated human beings. An enthusiasm for life and its wonders - exuberance. Yes, that exuberance at times needed to be directed, contained even, but not too much. It too is one of those essential Montana qualities. It travels hand-in-hand with the healthy respect for originality that brings the best out of lively characters brimful of potential. We have met quite a few of those (teachers as well as students) over our journey down the years.

There is also a sense of place that crystallises around the little mountain with its view over the lake, its historic buildings even when somewhat tatty. As student Pia Kiviaho would observe in the 1980s: *Beauty was constantly present, bringing grace to our learning process*. It is reflected in an awareness of the changing seasons that shines across the words of generations of Montaners (that word so loved, so proudly claimed, by early generations). As teacher Peter Oerhlein would say, many years after leaving the school: *The Magic Mountain continues to cast its spell well beyond the borders of Switzerland*.

Together, these are the elements of that Spirit of Montana, its constituent particles in their energetic dance around each other. We have seen episodes in the story when some of those elements were damaged or absent and the dance of the particles became clumsy. Those periods in Montana's history when the brakes went on. At such times it was Montana's essence, its spirit, that guided the way out of the storm like the beam from a lighthouse.

And so, the Spirit of Montana has withstood the passage of time. Over 100 years, systems have changed, economics have changed, organisations have changed. Curricula, career options and university entrance criteria, those too. Above all, the lives of the young people who are the reason for the school's existence are dazzlingly different to those of their brothers (and, gradually, sisters) in times gone past. Spirit describes the phenomenon well. Its shape shifts while its chemical composition, the essence of Montana, is a constant.

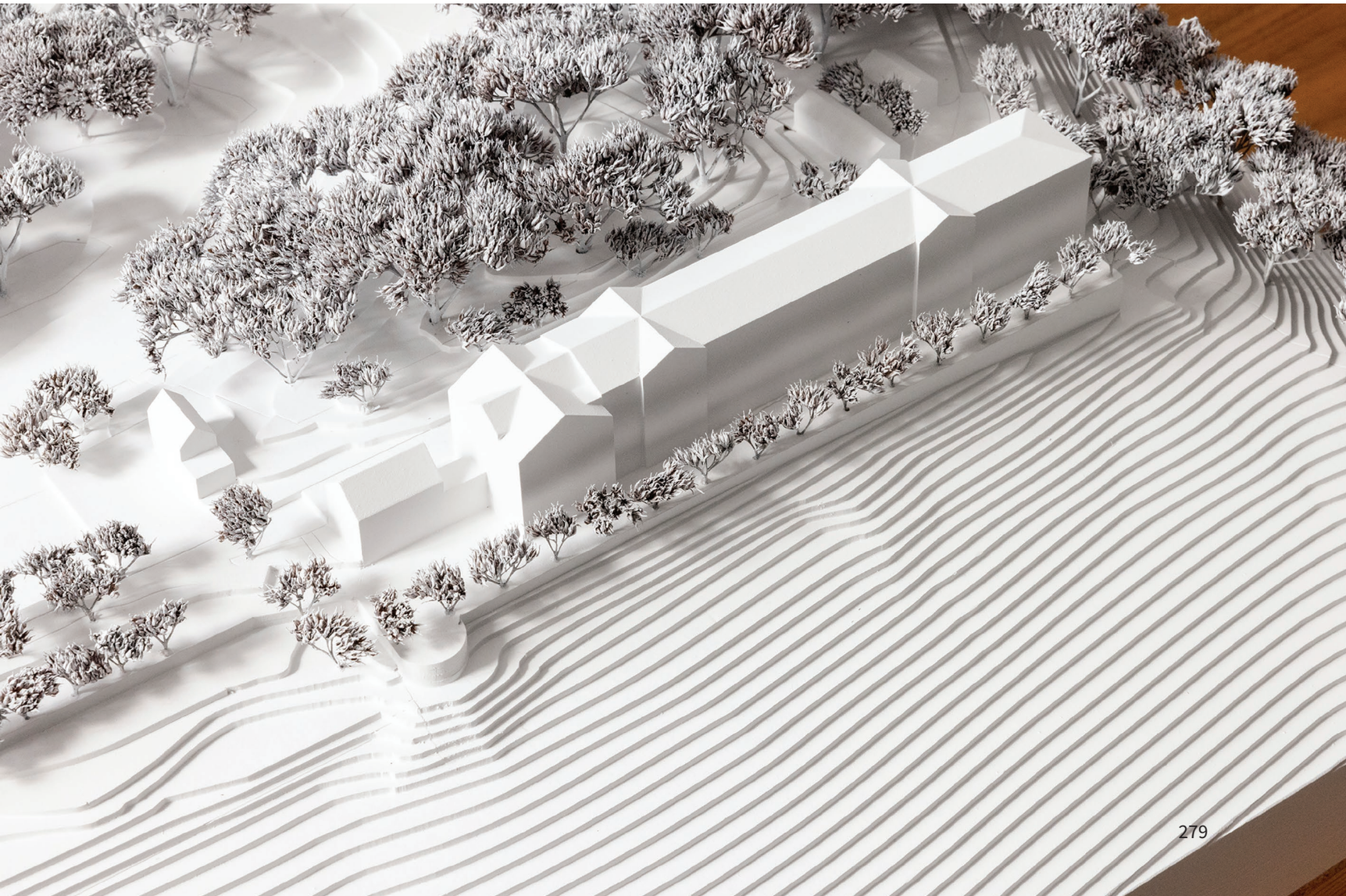
There is Individualism, there is Internationalism, there is Integration. As we came to know the place better, another theme rang louder, claimed our attention in an oft-repeated question.

What about integration?

There is plenty of evidence of Montana being very good at integration, from the haphazard groupings of those 1930s school boys through the (gradual) acceptance of girls to the ambiance of the revitalised boarding houses. However, as we followed Montana through the one hundred years, we came across many instances in different contexts where integration was noticeable by absence - including in statements made by contemporaries.
All the way back in the 1950s, teacher Paul Legras, setting up the Club for International Understanding, commented that integration at Montana needed work. He has been echoed by students and teachers in school publications down the years ever since.

Despite a firm belief in integration, separation was built into Montana's organisational model with its national sections. Internationalism was not something you taught, it was something you lived. The early phase was very fluid, the school was small and systems built into boarding school life proactively encouraged integration. Over time, separating walls arose within school organisation, sometimes small and easily surmountable, but not always. There were years of harmonious coexistence while sections essentially got on with doing their own thing. But that organisational habit of "doing their own thing" would evolve to make separation more entrenched and difference more pronounced.

Immediately after the crisis of the mid 1990s, New Montana set out explicitly to reaffirm integration and to make it happen. But the project faltered - why is not clear - time moved on and coexistence developed friction round the edges. Even while there were individuals who crossed bridges, the fact of bridges was an outcome of separation. There were contextual reasons for ensuing internal tensions but they were acted out in terms of different national curricula with different expectations about education, especially during a period of leadership instability. But this too is now changing. As



the final decade unfolded, we have seen drivers towards more integration set in motion and enter into the planning for the school's next steps. And those three "I"s continue to shine their light, to warn of treacherous rocks, and to guide the way.

Using the past to understand the present to inform the future

There is an easily missed quality of those three "I"s that became apparent as we peeled back the layers from this long and complicated history. They are not random, put into a slogan simply because they sound nice. Rather than separate boxes to tick, they work together and it is integration that acts as the binding agent.

For more than one hundred years, individualism has remained a central component in Montana teaching and learning. Small classes in a small school, skilful differentiated teaching, comprehensive provision of individually targeted learning support. The personal angle of valuing individuals including the quirky personalities, the questioners, the challenged. And the exuberant. But not the individualism of self-importance, arrogance, or superiority complexes. Integration is there to act against those outcomes.

Internationalism kicked Montana into existence. One hundred years later, it continues to be a school and a spiritual home for children, young people and adults of multiple languages, cultures, ethnicities and religions. But Montana did not set out to teach international-mindedness, simply to live it, and that required a lot of integration. As the school developed from solely boarding, the pressure to sustain integration became more challenging.

However, education for international-mindedness has also developed and now shapes many national curricula as well as international curricula. Given Montana's roots, Internationalism can be an integrating factor across all its programmes. International education has changed from when a few people would spend a limited time away from their home country and then return. People from all over the world (including Montana staff and students) move and work, settle and marry, across borders. For many, their children are blends of backgrounds and their family languages are polyglot. The idea of international education has developed to take account of the changes. It is a world of integration. It is Montana.

And the recent addition - Innovation. The idea of innovation brings to mind a fast changing digital world, groundbreaking teaching methods and shiny technology. It is all this and more.

Innovation is a state of mind. When it is not there, the rot can set in like the pervasive mould that eats away at the cement. Tomorrow the building starts to crumble. But it takes a well integrated organisation to make innovation serve the school effectively. To be partially progressive or intermittently innovative would be dangerous to the school's structural integrity.

Perhaps, after 100 years, it is clear that integration is the key.

Imagine....

Montana on the Zugerberg looking down on the lake. Well-proportioned historic buildings, gracefully vintage, harmonise with fabulously functional and yet elegant new additions. We see some attractive upgrades to boarding accommodation - there are many reasons in the modern world why residential schooling is a popular choice among mobile families and Montana is very good at it. There is a multipurpose gym that attracts spectators. It is becoming a bit of a healthy hang-out option among day students and boarders. But there is also an area for gathering people together that is easily turned into a performance space. Perhaps with inside and outside options and a bit of a cafeteria. Let's stop by for a coffee.

The performance space is well-used. Montaners and self-expression go together. There is music ringing across campus and it is complemented by other visual and performance arts. As well as challenging drama there is high-tech creativity, adventurous aesthetics from the traditional to the cutting-edge. The Chalet is alive: bright lights, camera, action! A rehearsal room is often used by student bands. Probably a staff band too - Montana is attracting the energetic, the creative, the dedicated. As it has over its long history.

Less expensive but important. All those elements that make up the essence of Montana regarding teaching and learning are active across all the academic programmes on offer. This is taking some work - there are intrinsic differences between international and national curricula that will always be there. But the Montana method is applicable throughout the school, talented teachers are committed to the

school and leading Montana students to achieve more than they believed possible.

Central to that Montana education are the four “I”s. Internationalism is taught right across the school. Even members of an international community must learn how integration really works. How do it at a personal level and a global. How those “I”s act together to celebrate and enrich cultural diversity. Even as the double-edged sword of technology becomes a threat to diverse, original thinking, Montana students are learning how to use their talents to remain free from its insidious reach by making use of their originality, their creativity. Their own intelligence. They will not only navigate change, they will help direct it for the better. Global problems are going to need global solutions and coming generations will be at the forefront, willingly or not. Their Montana education will be life-changing. Montana took on the world in 1926 and again in 1946 with a mission to contribute to a greater good. In many ways, the world is more international, more attendant to the importance of individual needs and individual expression than it was 100 years ago. It is more integrated. But in many ways, it is not and, in some ways, becoming less so.

Montana has the same commitment, the same energy, the same values as 100 years ago. In 2026, a Montana education is still about idealism and hope, about taking on the world. As was written on its 25th birthday back in 1951, it is a school of which to be proud.

Une école qui veut toujours rester jeune
A school that wants to stay forever young



SOURCES AND RESOURCES

All images and written quotations are from the archive of Institut Montana unless specified otherwise. Some quotations from interviews are not attributed out of respect for the privacy of the people who spoke with us.

Montana's history had been stored but not well-organised within the archive. But it contained every Montanablatt, Yearbook and nearly every brochure ever published, students' dossiers, folders of school records and a massive collection of random documents. There were boxes and albums of photographs that covered nearly all of Montana's history including fragile glass negatives from the very early years. There were crumbling containers with reels of flammable nitrate cine films from the late 1920s. Curios and artefacts. Digital storage media of every shape, size and compatibility from the so-called Desktop Revolution and onwards. Other gems turned up across campus in attics and cellars, nooks and crannies.

One of our collaborators, Jarryd Lowder, was introduced to the contents of the archive in Felsenegg by Charles Hohmann in 2015. Thanks to Lowder's meticulous work, the material has been investigated, sorted and catalogued. He digitally recovered photographs and films from the past and transferred the material to high-resolution formats, bringing them back to life.

The digital world online was also a rich source of information as we researched Montana's history. It led to journeys into some fascinating places and stories as we followed up every mention of the school in a vast array of publications. Thanks to many institutions and archives who have painstakingly catalogued their collections and made them searchable online (as well as to be viewed in person) there was a lot of information and extensive documentation to draw upon that have been previously unobtainable.

Previous research on education, including international education, carried out by another collaborator, Sara Randell, helped anchor Montana in the wider context of the history of schools. Her previous research into Max Husmann's role in Operation Sunrise was illuminating both on the events of the war years and what it revealed about Husmann's personality and ethics.

Special mention must be made of the book written by Dr Josef Ostermayer "50 Jahre Institut Montana Zugerberg 1926-1976". Its detailed account of the first 50 years of Montana provided an important framework that guided our work.

For the later years, we could also talk to former students and staff and add their voices to the story of Montana. The texture of personal experiences enriched the written sources and breathed life into the story.

Drafts of the text were examined by several former members of staff. Their contributions to the accuracy and authenticity of this history was invaluable.



The archive in Felsenegg, 2026. The shelves on the left contain the dossiers of students from the first 25 years of Montana.

Sources of information and documents include:

- The Archive of Institut Montana Zugerberg AG
- Staatsarchiv des Kantons Zürich
- Zentralbibliothek Zürich
- Stadtarchiv Zürich
- ETH Bibliothek, Hochschularchiv
- ETH Archiv für Zeitgeschichte
- ETH Baugeschichtliches Archiv
- Zentralgut, Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek Luzern
- Stadtbibliothek Zug
- E-periodica.ch
- E-newspaperarchives.ch
- Minerva Schweiz AG, Zürich

Books mentioned in the text

- International Education, Huldreich Sauerwein in Problems in Modern Education, ed. E.D. Laborde, published 1939.
- 50 Jahre Institut Montana Zugerberg 1926-1976, Dr Josef Ostermayer, published 1976.
- The Last Of Spring, Chapter 11 - The Delectable Mountain, Rupert Croft-Crooke, published 1964.
- Ending the War, Sara Randell, published 2018.
- A Voice from the Berg, Pia Kiviaho-Kallio, published 2021.

Message to the Reader

The sources were eclectic spanning more than a century back to the time of the hotels on the Zugerberg. We have made a sincere attempt faithfully to include everything significant and special about all that is Montana, though some difficult decisions had to be made about what not to include due to limited space and time. Equally, there will be characters throughout the years whose story did not make it onto the page despite their significance in the lives of many. It was simply impossible to recount all of the wonderful anecdotes of 100 years of this magical school.

If inaccuracies or omissions are identified, do know that we would be interested to hear about them. We are all, always, learning.

Please note: inconsistencies, mispunctuation or misspellings in the quotations are as they appear in the original.

No generative artificial intelligence has been used in the making of this book.



From the archive, a glass negative and a contact print made from it, circa 1930. Some of these glass negatives have pink discoloration which can be caused by degradation of the photographic emulsion over time.

Impressum

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