

FEATURE

Heidi Buchegger's teaching career takes her to Korea

By Bob Owen
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As daughter of Christian missionaries, Heidi Buchegger is on a life experience to share her joy and her Christian love — and she is doing it in South Korea.

Born in Bolivia to Joyce and Henry Buchegger of Castleton, Heidi spent most of the first 10 years of her life in South America.

While she was shielded from the fears of living near a hunting/gathering culture where warring and killing was routine, Heidi now appreciates many of the dangers her family faced.

She ran barefoot through most of her childhood days and collected tapirs, baby jaguars and roadrunners for pets.

It was quite a shock when she arrived in Castleton for the first time in the mid-70s and entered her first real school. She was in grade five.

She had come in a relatively short time from living in a cluster of three missionary huts, to television with *The Brady Bunch* and *The Partridge Family*. Crowds of kids filled the school playground of a little girl who had hunted rabbits with her brother and whose primary friends had been her five siblings.

From a tropical desert, she arrived to the extremes of the Canadian seasons.

But, she adjusted, meeting the challenges of her very changeable life.



Heidi Buchegger will be back in class at Taejon Christian International School in August.

had been teaching in South Korea, and mentioned that her school was still looking for teachers of grades one, three and five. It was mid-July, 2005.

Two weeks later, after conferring with her parents, her minister, her principal and the local school board — even her landlady — she was on a flight to South Korea where the school term starts in August. She had a weekend to get ready for her first grade one class.

It was culture shock once more.

On the surface, Korea is a modern culture, but it is based on deeply-entrenched traditions with a

school, now thriving and adding a second school in the Korean city of Suwon, almost folded in 1989. It had been established to school missionary kids. With the increasing Christian population in the country of 48-million, it was suggested the school was no longer needed.

With a changed mandate, the school now provides the population with a Christian western education in English.

Where from here?

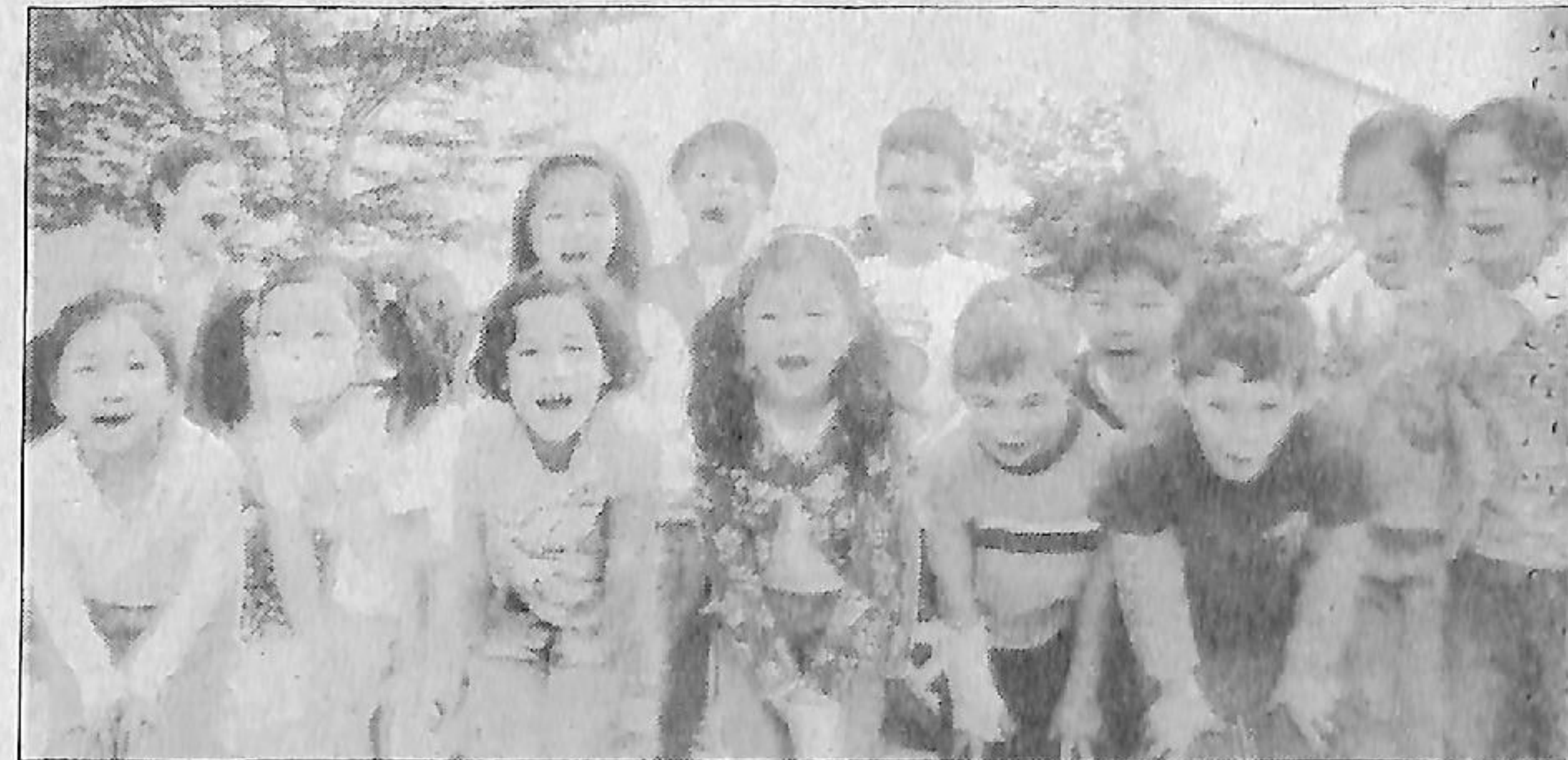
While her faith keeps her deeply rooted, don't ask Heidi for a commitment beyond this school year; she's just not sure.

In the Korean environment, she is honing her craft in an environment where the values are closely aligned to hers, and she clearly loves the children she

teaches. She can see herself in Korea for 30 years, or maybe only one.

Getting ready for her imminent return to Korea last week, she acknowledged her

emotions were in a tailspin. But, one suspects it won't be the traffic chaos or the inability to find clothes for her 5'8" frame that will determine whether this traveller will move on.



Heidi's Grade One class last year: The classes are small; the expectations are big in Korean schools.

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Central South Korea will be Heidi Buchegger's home for the next 10 months.

One of the best ways to improve your game is to watch the technique of a strong player.

