

# the diaspora potrezebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

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## A Message from the President

I'm writing this on the morning after I got home from our GREAT CLASS OF 73's 50<sup>th</sup> reunion in Charlotte, NC. Marke Baker and Maureen Beurskens did a fantastic job of pulling together three days of fun, food, drink, dancing and some tears; some happy, and some not. The connection we have is undeniable, and so special. I don't have an accurate tally of total attendance, but I believe around 60 people were there, (some spouses included) a few classmates who we had not seen or heard from in 50+ years. In addition, we were able to raise a nice amount of money to donate to the Maker Program at ACS, even though that was not really the purpose of the reunion.

What stands out for me after our reunion, having recently been in Lebanon and visiting ACS, is the legacy that our generation will leave behind for those that are just entering ACS. ACS provides a unique, exceptional educational experience that is unparalleled in Lebanon. It's up to us to continue to support the school, and leave behind a better place than we left so many years ago. The enrolment numbers are up and encouraging, but the school's physical property will continue to need updating. As we are encouraged by the direction the school is taking, our thoughts are with everyone affected by the current circumstances in the Middle East.

The Development team in Beirut has

been a tremendous support for us, and I encourage everyone to try and attend some of the "mini reunions" upcoming in various locations in the US and the Middle East. It's a great way to connect with old friends, as well as meet some of the younger, impressive ones who have graduated more recently. Washington DC and Dubai just took place, but NYC (I'll be there!), Boston, London, San Francisco and Seattle are coming up. Get ready for information about a possible "Homecoming" in Lebanon next year some time, as well as our traditional Triennial reunion in 2025. If you are interested in hosting, please let me or Elizabeth Vandenberg know.

Looking forward to seeing you, or hearing from you very soon!

My best



**Muriel & Gina**  
Photo: Richie Hanna

## In This Issue

A Message from the President . . . . .	1
A Message from the Editor . . . . .	2
Alumni Notes . . . . .	3
The 50th Reunion of the Great Class of '73 . . . . .	8
ACS Stories . . . . .	10
In Memoriam . . . . .	12
How to Stay Connected . . . . .	13

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## Message from the Editor

I would love to see more stories of ACS Couples, ACS Parents - just wonderful stories, like the ones we have already read and enjoyed. In this issue, we are starting a new series, about our pretty amazing teachers.

Please, if you have been a teacher at ACS, send us your story of how you got there, how you made that decision, how you experienced it, and maybe some of the adventures you had when you were there. To all of you alumni, please send me suggestions of the teachers you would love to read about. I have a few ideas of my own, but my ACS life was only from 1965 till 1970, which leaves a plethora of years - and teachers - to choose from for many, many alums.

The ACS gatherings that are mentioned in this issue are taking place, and more are scheduled. I am so happy, and feel so lucky, that I will be able to attend in San Francisco in February. I hope as many of you as possible will have the possibility to sign up and enjoy meeting old and new friends.

Fall is upon us, another year is almost done, and I hope you will enjoy this Fall issue of the Pot. I leave you with a recent photo from a good friend in Lebanon.

My best to you all,  
Alice Ludvigsen '70



Fall among the snobar trees.  
Photo: Sami Shams

# Alumni Notes

## Second Generation ACS'ers

*Editor's note:* When I saw this photo by **Yasmine Khayyat '2000**, I immediately recognized the sidewalk as the one outside ACS. I knew that Yasmine and her twin sister, Rola, had attended ACS, and here they were, Yasmine's twin daughters, on their way to start KG? First grade? In fact, Yasmine and all 4 of her siblings had attended ACS, and here is some background, an extract from a book written by their mother.

*Addendum:* As we now go to print, with a terribly uncertain time ahead for a part of the world we love so much, Fadia's words bring a sense of poignancy to the photo above. Her daughter, Yasmine, along with many other parents, are yet again having to deal with unrest and difficult decisions to be made.

## From Chapter 14 - Lessons in love, From Brownies and Kalashnikovs by Fadia Basrawi.

"Life during the civil war evolved its own routine. So long as people were not in the immediate line of fire, they dressed up for dinner parties, played cards, cried, loved, and died normal deaths. We did the same. I started each day with a schedule that I stuck to religiously and at times pathetically as I tried to keep things 'normal.' Rola and Yasmine, for example, grew up vaguely wondering why they had to hide under the sink every time it 'thundered,' which was my way of explaining the cannon thuds when they came uncomfortably near.

At long last, on February 28, 1988, we moved into our new house. coincided with



**Second generation ACS'ers on their first day of school at ACS. Photo: Yasmine Khayyat**

the coldest day of the year, and we didn't know how to work the heating, so we slept with our coats on. Despite this minor hitch, it became home very quickly as its walls filled with sounds of life and laughter of our children and their friends and ours.

Our children attended a reinvented American Community School (ACS), headed by an urbane and compassionate American from Philadelphia, Mrs. Catherine C. Bashour. She made the Americans look good. Tall and slim with short white-blond hair, Catherine Bashour had the kind of blue eyes that provoked confessions from wayward students with just one piercing look. She had moved to Beirut with her husband, Dr. Mounir Bashour, Dean of the Education Department of the American University of Beirut, whom she

had met while they were both graduate students in the University of Chicago. ACS being next door to AUB made it an easy commute for the young wife and she signed on as an English teacher. When the kidnapping of foreigners became a deadly political statement and the American Embassy was blown up by a suicide bomber, all the Americans were ordered to leave Beirut by their government and ACS closed down for lack of customers. Mrs. Bashour refused to leave despite intense pressure from her government. She loved Lebanon and she just wasn't the type to pick up her skirts and run. After the dust settled somewhat, the Americans renewed their presence in Lebanon in 1985, and turned to Mrs. Bashour to breathe life into ACS once more. Of a practical nature, knowing that its former raison d'être was no longer there, she opened the doors of the school to non-Americans for the first time in ACS's history. She had never understood the elitist segregation policy of the former ACS in the first place.

The first wave of Lebanese children to fill



**16 June 2003: A celebration dinner at home for Yasmine and Rola's graduation from AUB. The guest of honor was Catherine Bashour, their beloved former principal of ACS. Left to right: Amer, Munira, Rola, Mrs. Bashour, Yasmine and Ghassan. Photo: Fadia Basrawi**

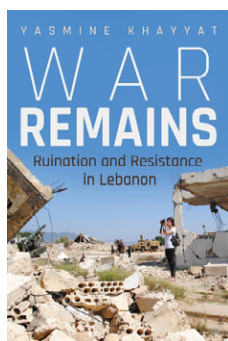
*Continued on page 4*

# Alumni Notes

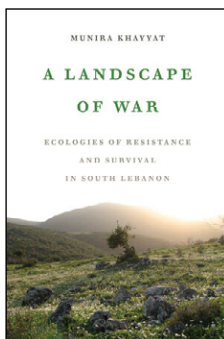
the student roster consisted of a total of seventy students, eleven of them Khayyats. They feel fortunate to have been under Mrs. Bashour's guidance particularly during the dark and confusing days of the civil war. On those days when deafening crashes of artillery and mortar shells would come out of nowhere she was there to wipe their noses and dry their tears and soothe their terrified teachers, who would sob with fear as they tried to distract the children with a book.

No sooner were the guns silenced, than we would push their presence out of our immediate world and go on with our lives. We proudly watched our children celebrate the four seasons and the holidays in song and dance on their school's stage, determinedly ignoring the distant crashes of mortar fire so long as they were out of range. Birthday parties and play dates at our home were scheduled when circumstances allowed. When circumstances didn't allow, we brought birthday cakes and party favors to our children's classrooms."

Yasmine has published a "War Remains - Ruination and Resistance in Lebanon", about wartime Lebanese literature and its sites of memory, especially in south Lebanon. <https://press.syr.edu/supressbook-author/khayyat-yasmine/>



Her sister, **Munira Khayyat '93**, has also published a book called "A Landscape of War - Ecologies of Resistance and Survival in South Lebanon". <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520389991/a-landscape-of-war>



## **Munir Kreidie '78** **Travel Notes from Lebanon:**

Finally, after many delays: COVID, film projects, family events, etc., I was on my way to Lebanon 22 years after my last visit. A last minute family emergency for my wife had her going to Ecuador and a new flying program grounded (or rather lifted) my younger son into the air, leaving just my elder son, also Munir, and myself traveling to Beirut. I flew in to Frankfurt to meet up with my son coming in from The Netherlands, spent a day with my sister and we took off for BEY.

We weren't sure what to expect there. Gina Kano, who had just recently returned, offered advice about it being a cash only place with few opportunities to use cards, so I booked all hotels and a rental car in advance. We arrived early in the morning and got a rather expensive taxi ride to the Napoleon Hotel just a block off Hamra. I highly recommend it. Clean, great location, friendly staff and very affordable. You could say it was a second time for my son, as the last time I was in Beirut my wife was pregnant with him.

We spent the first day walking around town. I found it very chaotic, especially on the roads as there are few functioning traffic lights, leaving each intersection a test of nerves as the cars fight their way through, barely any rules on driving, and thousands of Vespa motor scooters zipping in every direction on and off the streets and sidewalks. We finally got a taxi to take us to the Patisserie Kreidie, and feasted on the best baklava on earth. OK, maybe a slight family preference here. I recall often going to my uncle's original shop downtown after school, which was completely destroyed during the civil war. My cousins have since reopened on Bourj Abu-Haidar. We had lunch with them, and it was good to see family after so many years.

On July 11 we visited ACS. Nabila Kesrewan, the new Alumni Relations Officer, showed us around the campus. Many lovely and ancient memories were rekindled and I got to show Munir all the places that were so familiar to me. The school appears in great shape and looks wonderful. I enjoyed seeing the gym, the art rooms, where I made many films with Mr. Ruehl; the beginning of my film career, but at that time behind the camera. We checked out the sports fields, classrooms, courtyards and so many places I remembered from so long ago. I was impressed with the new faculty apartment building and began to imagine myself returning to ACS as a teacher in a year or two. Who knows? As I sat by the famous tree surrounded by the square concrete bench I thought of how many of us spent hours talking, relaxing or just passing through life here.

# Alumni Notes

Later we checked out the downtown which is completely rebuilt, but eerily empty of people and cars. In the evening we dined at Bella Napoli near Pigeon Rocks, which has been in operation since 1963 and where I recall having my first ever pizza over a half century ago.

Feeling courageous, we rented a car and began our tour of Lebanon, stopping first at the Jeita Grotto where we marveled at the amazing ancient stalagmites and stalactites (I always had difficulties telling which was which). Continuing to the Mseilha Fort near Batroun we walked around the fort, but couldn't enter as it was fenced off and nobody was there to let us in. Still I recalled the many times we visited and spent nights there the 1970's - one of my favorite places in Lebanon - followed by a quick stop at Lemonade Chahine for an amazingly refreshing drink like the ones we used to have so many years ago.

We ended the day in Jbeil (Byblos) where we walked around the town checking out the ancient sites and lovely harbor, capping it off with dinner at Chez Pepe. A lovely evening for sure. We spent the night at a near deserted Sea View Hotel. Nice, clean, but out of the way. We took



**Two Munirs in Saida**

off for Tripoli and checked out the Citadel de Raymond de Saint-Gilles. For some strange reason, we never visited this during my eleven years of living in Lebanon so something was new for both of us. It is an enormous crusader fortress that dominates a large part of Lebanon's second largest city. We enjoyed a sweaty walkabout until, exhausted, we left for water and falafel just outside, and a respite from the heat to our air-conditioned rental car. Next, a journey up the mountains to visit the "Cedars of Heaven", taking some time to wander through those magnificent ancient trees. This was followed by a drive to the top of the Lebanon Mountain range where we could see vast areas leading to the coast on



**The Bekaa Valley**

one side and the Bekaa Valley on the other. We finally made it to Baalbeck by evening, but were unable to attend the show that night. Spent the night at a new hotel called Kanaan Suites. Clean, but still having birthing pains, though it seems to have potential. The next day we visited the amazing Roman sites of Baalbeck. I've always been fascinated with this place as far back as the 1960's. It was so cool to show it off to my son. More street food



**A hot day in Baalbeck**

and we're driving south and back up in the mountains. We stayed at a very quirky B&B, Remhala Guest House, run by an interesting photographer who was happy to show us some of his photo books.

Another day of travel visiting the Mleeta Museum of the Resistance. A showpiece of the Hezbollah resistance against the Israeli occupation of the 1980's and 90's and their liberation of Lebanon. Interesting and very welcoming displays of captured Israeli equipment and the struggle they faced. Later, a drive along the coast to Saida and a chance to visit the sea fortress there. Returning to Beirut we spent our remaining time visiting relatives and feasting on the amazing food of Lebanon. Two weeks in Germany with cousins from my mother's side of our family followed.

Could I return to live in Beirut? I feel such a strong desire to do so. So odd that I felt so much more comfortable there than in the US, despite having spent most of my life here. As I approach retirement the thought

*Continued on page 6*

# Alumni Notes

of moving back to Lebanon intrigues me. However, the knowledge that my Lebanon, the amazing place where I grew up, is gone in so many ways causes me to hesitate. The complete economic breakdown, the corruption in government and the long shadow of more Israeli aggression is always a factor as well. That decision will have to wait as I sort things out. In the meantime, I am already planning another trip there. This time with my entire family. Life is too short to wait another 22 years.

From **Faten Hayeck**, Research & Development Officer at the Development & Alumni Relations office in Beirut:

## We love having visitors!

So I thought to send this over for the POT: **Fred and Nancy Hoffman** taught at ACS in 1974-1975. Nancy taught mathematics, and Fred taught physics – both at the Secondary School. This is their first visit to Beirut since then. They are now living in Virginia. Below is their photo with our Head of School, **Thomas Cangiano**.



## Reunion on Whidbey Island by Marc Ellis Lathrop '73



Before the feast! Left to right - Michael Kano, Mark Lathrop, Barbara Boynton, Lynn Hill, Chris Boynton, Steve Krival, Pieter DeVos, JoAnn Atwood, Chris Wolfe, Cynthia Soghikian Wolfe, and Hilary Henry-Neff.

The weekend of August 3-6 was another **Class of '72 reunion**, only this time on the west coast. We missed many of our classmates in Baltimore so thought it would be good to give it another shot. So everyone met in Oak Harbor, Washington for a great weekend. Michael Kano, Mark Lathrop, Kit Lathrop, Barbara Boynton, Chris Boynton, Steve Krival, Lynn Hill, Pieter DeVos, JoAnn Atwood, Chris Wolfe, Cynthia Soghikian Wolfe, Hilary Henry-Neff, Jay Neff, and Al Leomo all made the trip. Between bike rides we had good food and drinks, and great conversations. Al Leomo was chef extraordinaire with lots of help, Lynn Hill and Pieter DeVos one night and Chris and Barbara Boynton the other did all the kitchen



Dishwashers, Cynthia and Pieter.



Michael Kano, the storyteller, and his captive audience, Chris and Barbara Boynton.

cleanup, Michael Kano had a million stories, and everyone else caught up on the latest news. Both nights were fantastic. Sunday morning, after some blackberry picking (Chris Wolfe's height made picking much easier), crepes were served to send everyone on their way. Hate to see it end but looking forward to doing it again.... someday!

## Reunion at Glen Grubbs '71



Photo: Donna Hansen '74

The (almost) annual reunion at Glen and Debra Grubbs took place on the 12th of August this year, and, as usual, a fantastic time was had by all. One of the participants writes: "It was a gorgeous afternoon and a wonderful



Photo: Donna Hansen '74

# Alumni Notes

opportunity for some great conversations and delicious food. Thank you to the Grubbs for their hospitality!"

## From the Dubai gathering in September:

So many smiling faces united at our ACS Alumni Dubai Gathering in September, with thanks to alum Ziyad Ayass who gave us his restaurant to host the event. We are looking forward to the many more to be hosted this year in both the US & London!



The ACS team, left to right: Development Officer, Faten Hayeck, Head of School, Thomas Cangiano, and Alumni Relations Officer, Nabila Kesrewan.



Athletic director Martin Mougharbel greets his old students



Alumni from class years 2001-2015 gather with Head of School, Thomas Cangiano.

## From the Washington D.C. gathering, 18th October:



L-R: Cathy '77, Jim Porter '67, Becky Sibley '70



L-R: Jay Bruder '74, Betsy van den Berg '74, Nabila Kesrewan, Alumni Relations, and STV '74



Barbara Porter '71 and Marwan Kreidie.

Photos from ACS, Beirut-Alumni on Facebook



## ALUMNI GATHERINGS 2023-24

Sept 21 DUBAI	Oct 18 WASHINGTON DC	Nov 18 NEW YORK	
Jan 18 LONDON	Jan 25 BOSTON	Jan 30 SEATTLE	Feb 1 SAN FRANCISCO

Sign up using this link: <https://acsbeirut.website/tour>

# 50th Reunion of the Great Class of 1973



Photo: Richie Hanna

## By Cat Essoyan Hopen

At the Baltimore triennial reunion last August, Maureen Beurskens and Marke Baker volunteered to organize the 50th reunion of the Great Class of 1973. They polled classmates to select the location and settled on Charlotte, North Carolina, where they live. Prior to the reunion, we were invited to write short autobiographies which were shared with the class and made fascinating reading. We would warmly

recommend this practice to other classes celebrating their reunions! The reunion took place from October 20-22. In the months leading up to the reunion, Marke did tireless detective work trying to track down members of our class scattered across the US and the world. On the last evening, we gave Marke and Maureen Sherlock Holmes and Watson hats and paraphernalia to commemorate their successful sleuthing.



On the Thursday evening before the reunion, Maureen and Marke hosted 34 of us, class members and spouses, at their lovely home in Charlotte for a delicious Lebanese mezze. The weather was good so we could spill out on to the patio. The mezze was made by a Syrian woman in the Charlotte area and Maureen, Noreen O'Donnell and I had also made spanakopita triangles and baklava for it in the days leading up to the reunion. Two of Maureen's sons and their wives joined us at the mezze and it was fun to meet them. It was wonderful to see so many classmates, many of whom we had not seen since graduation. We had a graduating class of 86 and 49 people attended the reunion (including 11 spouses.) They came from 16 US states and the Netherlands, Austria, Lebanon, and Canada. Sadly, shortly before the



Missing Mug! René Hopen, Javed Husain and Eddy Tamura.

Photo: Ruth Harms.



## 50th Reunion of the Great Class of 1973 Continued

reunion, a number of class members were not able to make it due to illness and/or other commitments and we missed them. Ruth Harms had brought a large picture of Mug Kelberer which we included in some of our group photos. We also zoomed with Mug who was recuperating in St Paul

On Friday evening, we kicked off our reunion with drinks and dinner at the NASCAR Hall of Fame which was across the street from our hotel. It was fun to check out the different racing cars, including Lightning McQueen from the movie Cars, which we were told was the most popular car in the collection.



**First row: Jeanie Mullin, Jane McKinley, Tanya Parker Mills, Janet (Catalan) Knoblach, Cat (Essoyan) Hopen, Noreen O'Donnell, Muriel Brunger, Judi (Butler) Perez. Second row: Delinda Curtiss, Gina Kano, Anne Fawaz, Jooske Stil, Debbie (Schuller) Edmunds. Third row: Randi (Young) Mockensturm, Maureen Beurskens, Ruth (Harms) Hickman.**  
Photo: Cat Essoyan

We took group photos and enjoyed reconnecting with our classmates. On Saturday morning, we had a group conversation which was ably led by Charlie Pellett. Members of the panel who were selected randomly included David Allen, Randi Young, Ruth Harms, Pete Canarella and Muriel Brunger. Topics of conversation included our memories of the stinky steps, our memories of our last day in Beirut, the transition challenges we faced after leaving Beirut, and

who we considered to be our most underrated teachers. We were also asked what our message would be to the Class of 2024 and the responses included: "enjoy the moment," "keep in touch, reach out," "the difference you make for one person matters," and "enjoy all you can in Lebanon."



**Bob Moore, Judi Butler, and Kent Redford.** Photo: Cat Essoyan

Following the panel conversation, a large group of us went on a bus tour of Charlotte and its suburbs. We stopped at the Romare Beardon park which honors a contemporary African American artist. While there we took some group photos in front of the fountain. Later we stopped at the Optimist Hall, a food court with many different ethnic food stands, which is built on



**Ritchie Porter and Bayard Dodge.** Photo: Cat Essoyan

the former site of the largest textile mill in Charlotte. On Saturday evening, we had drinks kindly hosted by Marke Baker and Pete Canarella. This was followed by dinner and dancing. We had a moment of silence to remember our classmates who have passed away. We had a DJ and danced with great enthusiasm to songs from our past. Ritchie Porter was a real star on the dance floor. It must be said it was mostly women from our class who were dancing. We had a great time! Later Gina Kano and Anne Fawaz did some lovely Arabic dancing and we ended with a dabke, with some of us laughing as we tried to figure out the footwork.

We were invited to earmark our Great Class of 1973 contribution to ACS for The Maker Program, an after school program for all grades. It is a hands-on approach to learning in which students use science or engineering principles to make things or apply knowledge from other classes, for example in coding or programming. Niecy (Armstrong) Chambers and her husband Duff generously offered to match the first \$10,000 of our contributions! Gina Kano, who heads the ACS Alumni Council, proudly announced that we had collected \$23,335 in contributions! Unfortunately, Tom Cangiano, ACS Head of School, and his wife were unable to join us in Charlotte due to the uncertainty of the current political situation in the region. He sent us a video message

updating us on recent developments and upcoming plans at ACS.

On behalf of the Great Class of 1973, I would like to close by warmly thanking Maureen and Marke for all their efforts to prepare for and deliver a truly memorable 50th reunion. It was a huge success.



**René Hopen, Cat Essoyan, Bob Edmunds, Bayard Dodge, Noreen O'Donnell, Debbie Schuller Edmunds.** Photo: Cat Essoyan



**We miss you, Mug!!** Photo: Ruth Harms

# ACS Stories

The perfect transition from stories of ACS couples to a new “series” - ACS Teachers - came when Carol and Robin Schaub sent us their story.

## **Carol and Robin Schaub (fac. 1969-75) Married 60 years!**

This isn't the usual “met in school, went to college, got married” kind of story. We met in 1951 in the Junior Choir at our church. (Robin was a boy soprano!) Five years later we were going steady. The black and white picture was taken in June 1956. We dated as another five years pass, and now in the early '60s we were engaged and saw a double feature—“Three Coins in a Fountain” and “Love Is a Many Splendored Thing”. Walking back to the car, talking about the movies, we discussed how much fun it would be to travel and go to places like Italy and Japan that we had just seen in the movies. But how could we do it? Teach!! Carol was a piano major in college and figured she'd wind up giving piano lessons in the living room as her mother did. Robin had been to two colleges, spent three years in the army, and would be majoring in math.

After graduating from college, we moved to Baltimore, got our required three years of teaching experience for international school positions, and interviewed first with Frank Ford and then Jack Harrison. Those six years at ACS were the best teaching years of our careers. During school vacations we went camping through Europe and the travel bug really hit us. Robin went on to administration, we were at schools in Jeddah, London, and Robin also in Bahrain and Cairo. In total, we have been to 89 countries, and still looking for #90.

Robin officially retired at age 80, and Carol is still Director of Music and Organist at Cameron United Methodist Church in Alexandria, Virginia. We celebrated our 60th anniversary (color photo) in June with a cruise to Alaska. People sometimes comment “60 years! How did you do it?” The answer is simple...we're best friends.



## **Beirut memories by Cindy Parrott - aka “Miss Foose”**



I left the U.S. for Beirut to escape the turmoil that threatened to engulf me in the second half of the 1960s. My Cambridge apartment regularly filled with tear gas; my students showed up at my door, bloodied by riot police, needing me to contact their parents. Shocked by one assassination after another and seeing news broadcasts

of police turning fire hoses on children, I felt overwhelmed. After four years reading novels and poetry, studying history and art on a lush and pastoral campus at Wellesley College, and carrying on rarefied conversations with fellow students at Harvard Graduate School of Education about what was worth teaching and how to do it successfully, I had landed a wonderful job at Brookline High School. My students were smart and interested in learning, and my fellow teachers were stimulating colleagues. Nevertheless, after four years of grappling with what role I should play in the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in Harvard Square and how I could be helpful to my Black students who were daily bussed out of Roxbury to my suburban school (at great personal and emotional cost to them), I was exhausted and sad. I decided to take a year off, to recharge my batteries, and I asked for a year's leave of absence.

Multiple interviews in Boston hotel rooms, which always made them seem slightly illicit, yielded offers of teaching positions in Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Vienna, and Beirut. There was political unrest in Brazil, so I abandoned that idea; my small teaching salary wouldn't go far in expensive Japan; I figured I'd get to Vienna on my own some day; so I chose Beirut. My uncle, who headed the geology department at Amherst, had briefly taught at AUB, and he assured me Beirut was beautiful, welcoming, and wonderfully located for travel in all directions. So off I went, hoping to dodge the frequent airline hijackings occurring at the time.

As we all know, Beirut was gorgeous, redolent with history, fascinatingly culturally complex, and totally seductive. After I realized one year wouldn't be nearly enough to take advantage of this place, I quit my job in Massachusetts. On my \$8,000 annual salary, over the four years I taught at ACS, I was able to travel to Cyprus, Turkey, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Russia, Egypt and up the Nile to Khartoum in the Sudan, around the Mediterranean from Lebanon to Spain and then across North Africa, take a cruise of the Greek Islands, and spend successive Christmases in Rome, London, and Paris. I even saved enough money to help pay for a year's living expenses when I returned to the U.S. for more graduate school. ACS students, whose backgrounds brought

## ACS Stories Continued

so much richness to the classroom, were a delight. Many of my fellow teachers became life-long friends. Countless memories flood back when I think of those years. Shortly after I arrived in Beirut, Nasser died, and I vividly recall being sequestered in the boarding department at ACS while the Lebanese and most Arabs mourned his loss. Attending concerts at Baalbek, where I saw Alvin Ailey, the Bolshoi, Ella Fitzgerald, and others were once-in-a-lifetime experiences. The year I was senior class advisor, the prom occurred at Beiteddine Palace. It felt like living in a fairy tale. My shared apartment near the Sanayeh Gardens cost \$100 dollars a month, had three bedrooms, and balconies large enough to hold thirty or forty people. I container gardened there until my apartment mate, Judy Moser, also at ACS, brought home the elementary school bunny for us to babysit over a school break and it ate all my plants down to nubs. I can still feel the approach of the Khamsin near Easter time, driving sand under the window panes, turning the sky yellow and purple, and causing our cat, Habibi, rescued from a Beirut alley, to whine and rub against the furniture. Once, a minor earthquake sent me sliding across our marble floors from one wall to another. Our landlord, who lived one floor below us, queried my parents, when they came to visit, about the likely amount of my dowry. My father responded that he expected any potential husband to pay HIM for taking me off his hands. I recollect bathtub spigots left open overnight in hopes of collecting enough water for the coming 24 hours. The stinky steps were a gauntlet run every day on my walk to school. And there was the luscious turquoise and green water of the Mediterranean. I lay on the beaches pondering how the elegant Arab women around me seemed, like Esther Williams, the 1950's American movie star of water ballet fame, managed to swim and still emerge from the sea with their glamorous coiffures perfectly intact.

As a member of the planning committee for F.I.G., the Foreign International Group, I helped organize monthly mixers, usually at a Beirut restaurant, for expatriates in Beirut to meet one another. At one of those dinners I met the man I dated for the four years I was in Lebanon, along with employees at various embassies, graduate students at AUB, businessmen and women, teachers at other schools in the city, archaeologists, journalists, and the occasional spy. Judy and I took belly dancing lessons from a teacher named Freddy, a proudly certified Arthur Murray instructor! After buying sequins and fringe in the souk, I made a costume and landed a job at the Phoenicia Hotel, where I performed for a group of Kodak salesmen who needed something to film on the newly designed cameras

that picked up sound along with moving images. These home movies traveled with them back to Syria, Jordan, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere. (I made more money per minute at that job than any other!) In the ACS weight room, surveyed by a poster of bodybuilder Charles Atlas on the wall, I taught ACS students my dance moves. Our "troupe" performed at an all-school assembly while Hank Rigler, my fellow English teacher, dressed as an appreciative Pasha with a hookah shisha, sat at the side on the stage. I loved the freedom of teaching in a private school where I could design my own courses and teachers could teach to their particular strengths. I remember a unit I based around *The Foxfire Book*, first published in 1972, on crafts and cultural wisdom specific to Appalachia. On that model, my students taught each other crafts they'd picked up during their often peripatetic childhoods. One built a quilting frame we lowered from the classroom ceiling. We sat around the fabric sewing images that illustrated key moments in our respective pasts. (I managed to sew right into my own dress and stockings and needed help extricating myself.) I discovered that another student, busily fabricating something in a corner, was creating a still. (Her family in Saudi Arabia were adept at brewing dark and light alcohol in the bathtub.) Needless to say, that project never came to fruition.



**Some students visiting one of their very favorite teachers. L-R: Beth Basson '73, Lori Basson '75, René Hopen '73, Cat Essoyan '73.**

**Photo: Cat Essoyan '73.**

I considered staying in Beirut for a longer time, but being an expatriate taught me how little I understood my own country, where Watergate was unfolding, and unrest continued. I decided I had better go home to try to make some sense of what being an American means. I knew most of my dear students from ACS were embarking on a similar quest, many of them not having lived for any length of time in the country that was, ostensibly, home. So, I moved to Washington, D.C., to embark on a Ph.D. in American Studies and to try to figure it all out. Considering current events, I'm definitely still working on this! My time at ACS very much contributed to who I am. I will always be grateful for those years. Interactions on social media with former ACS students helped me survive the isolation of the Covid pandemic. Their wonderful successes bring me much joy. What an amazing group! Special thanks to Cat Essoyan, who let me sleep on her couch when I was doing research in Philadelphia years ago, to Rene Hopen for having the good sense to marry Cat, an event I knew was foreordained, even when they were at ACS; to Richie Hanna, who put me back in touch with so many former ACS students; to Glen Grubbs, who has to be the most generous and loyal ACSer ever; and, finally, to Alice Ludvigsen for all her informative, thematic issues of the *Potrzebie* and for inviting me to tell my story!

# In Memoriam

## **Carolyn Beurskens Buriff wrote:**

Just learned tonight and am so sad to report that Hal Getty, former PE teacher in 74-75 has passed away this past May. We reconnected 10-12 years ago. He was definitely one of the good guys.

## **Harold Lee Getty - September 7, 1952 - May 27, 2023**

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Harold Lee Getty of Palm Harbor, Florida, who passed away on May 27, 2023, at the age of 70, leaving to mourn family and friends. He was predeceased by : his parents, Leland Getty and Ruth Getty of Burlington, Vermont. He is survived by : his significant other Darlene Coryea; his children, Amanda Benedict and Michael Getty; the mother of his children Kathy Getty; his children, Melissa Robson and Kellen Robson; his grandchildren, Cora, Charlie Benedict, Charlotte and Kieran Robson; and his brothers, Richard (Janet Getty), Eric, Dayna Olson-Getty and Matthew (Holly Getty).

## **From Chris Lund '64:**

This is for all that knew, crossed paths with, talked to, admired and befriended Ms Jane Monroe, Faculty 1962-64.

Of course, there has been periodic interest on Facebook and its precursor, (Børre Ludvigsen curated, The List), about whatever happened to lovely/iconic math teacher. Brief comments and photos from that early 60's period were often attached to emails and messages. As I write this notice, realize that there is good news and bad news here. Ms Monroe died two years ago at age 87, or so, but the good news is based on a couple of articles (and her students expectations), she lived an extraordinarily rich and full life, traveled and taught across the MidEast, Japan and was vital and spirited - a friend and teacher who did so much for so many. Much in the attached articles is new detail, brings us up to date (sort of)



and quotes Ms Monroe showing her humor and compassion. Twenty years ago, I somehow knew that she had become a faculty member at the Columbia Teachers College (the vaunted CTC). In 2004, I ended up living fairly close (teaching at Fordham), had an apartment three blocks away, and used to park in front of her office at the Columbia teachers. I lived in Upper Manhattan for 14 years - 2002 until 2016 or so. I contacted Ms Monroe via email in 2009. Heard back with a brief note that she

was fine and sent her hello to all faculty and students who knew her in Lebanon. It didn't occur to me that she was about to retire in 2010.

Ms Monroe was a truly loved person when she taught at ACS Beirut as a math Calc, Algebra, etc. teacher at ACS. She was especially an inspired motivator and explainer for many of us who were not particularly committed to math. I was one of those hesitant (diffident?) math students. Note: I did quite well on the Math SAT. Ms Monroe tracked me down and gently scolded me for my lack of work/effort (which was almost nonexistent).

The thin (but not frail), diminutive woman told me I needed to live up to expectations. She said as a result of my lethargy, I had to take lunchtime study hall. A punishment and a bit embarrassing, frankly. The time spent worked, and I worked on it, and returned to her good graces (and to my own self approval).

I love the attached photo of Miss Monroe on the corniche in Beirut tightrope-walking on a metal railing heading towards Mark McKnight (also precariously trying to navigate the railing, shown in a 1964 photo shot by Student Body Pres. Andy Harada).



Attached to this email is an article mentioned above in the HUDM Newsletter covering Ms Monroe's retirement and providing another fairly extensive overview of her life. This is link to a detailed retirement piece by Columbia Teachers editor Michael Swart, HUDN Newsletter. [http://www.michaelswart.com/HUDN/HUDN\\_v3\\_i1\\_S10.pdf](http://www.michaelswart.com/HUDN/HUDN_v3_i1_S10.pdf)

A tribute (written February 26, 2021) to Professor Monroe written by Thomas Baily: Sad News: The Passing of TC's Jane Monroe Friday, February 26, 2021

Dear Members of the Teachers College Community,

I am saddened to report the passing of Jane A. Monroe (Ed.D. '80), who served Teachers College with distinction for more than 30 years

# In Memoriam

as Associate Professor of Statistics & Education and as Chair of the Department of Human Development before retiring in 2010.

The leitmotif to Professor Monroe's career was service to students. As a mathematics major in college, she passed up a lucrative job offer at Mobil in order to pursue a career in teaching. She frequently described her first teaching position, in a small and very poor town outside of Denver, as the best job she ever had. Much of her focus there was teaching arithmetic and consumer math, which empowered students to do real-world activities such as evaluating insurance policies, writing checks, shopping and comparing prices.

Professor Monroe also put her students first during her time at Teachers College. Generations of TC graduates in the social sciences and other fields were able to complete their degrees because Jane Monroe helped them to learn, understand and apply statistics to their work. During one particular year, she estimated that she worked on no fewer than 100 dissertations, assisting their authors with design and statistical analysis. Indeed, as she liked to recall, she did so much of that work while still an instructor that, at the announcement of her appointment as an Assistant Professor, she received a standing ovation.

As TC moves to the forefront of digital teaching and research, it is worth recalling that Professor Monroe also played a key role

in preparing the College for the arrival of the computer age. She introduced the use of mechanical calculators for processing and analyzing large data sets at TC, and subsequently, for translating data for analysis by computer.

Professor Monroe was also an avid traveler who taught at what was then Teachers College's branch campus in Japan. She served with an international team of education experts who worked with Afghanistan's Ministry of Education to develop the capacity to write elementary curriculum and textbooks. She also was an accomplished amateur athlete who competed in baseball against boys during her own school years and, as a junior-high school teacher, promoted girls' athletics during the pre-Title IX days.

Finally, Professor Monroe was deeply devoted to the College and her faculty colleagues. A beloved mentor, she welcomed generations of new faculty, and was staunchly supportive of them as they learned "the ropes." She always could be counted on to offer a fair, clear-eyed view of the issues of the day — and how they bore on the well-being of TC's faculty, students, and staff. She definitely was a welcoming and supportive colleague to me after I arrived at TC.

In notifying us of Jane Monroe's passing, her niece poignantly observed that her aunt was, without a doubt "three standard deviations above the mean." She will be greatly missed.

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