

the diaspora potrzebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

Volume XLV Number 2

Our 45th year of publication

August 2023

A Message from the President

LEBANON...18(ish) YEARS LATER

By Gina Kano '73

I have wanted to attend a Board of Trustees meeting in Lebanon for some time now, but COVID and other stuff just got in the way, but this year just felt different, and right. Lucky for me, my good friend Cathy Carson (class of '72), wanted to come along, which made the visit even more poignant. She hadn't been back for 50 years.

We were told that hardly any businesses accept credit cards; on the evening that we checked into our first hotel, the manager was not there. I was trying to negotiate the use of the credit card with a nice man at the front desk. He finally gave us our keys, wished us a good night, and told us to speak with the manager in the morning. No money or cards were exchanged. Where else would that happen? The manager accepted the card the next morning, so it all worked out. It was a great start to our trip, and set the tone for the treatment we received throughout the trip. Another sign of this, and of the feeling of safety that we welcomed also took place at this hotel. Credit cards were hardly accepted anywhere, so we had to take A LOT of cash. I was bringing some jewelry back for some ACS friends, so I had separated the cash in a few envelopes. It was quite a sight to see Cathy and me counting our money on the beds, with piles of cash being separated into

various envelopes. Everything went into the safe...or so we thought. I had inadvertently left an envelope of cash on my bed. When we came back, the room was cleaned, and the envelope was left near my pillow, all the money intact. It took my breath away, realizing what I had done, and knowing that it could have so easily been taken. The woman who cleaned our room had been working at this hotel for over 20 years. I found her, I hugged her, and thanked her. According to her, she had no choice but to leave the money for me. We became very friendly and left her a very generous tip when we left. Really touching...

The accommodations were much better than expected, despite the small challenges. Cathy was particularly concerned about the electricity issues especially as they relate to the elevators; at any given time, it can switch from a generator to the government supplied electricity. Usually later on in the evening, the lights would go out for a few seconds and then come back on. We just didn't want to be on the way up to the 12th floor when this took place! My cousin, who lives in Lebanon, waits for the government electricity in order to do all the heavy duty things like washing, drying, vacuuming etc, so she can save on her personal generator costs.

Continued on page 3

In This Issue

A Message from the President	1
Reunion 2025	2
Beirut Homecoming	2
Alumni Notes	4
In Memoriam	9
ACS Couples	11
How to Stay Connected.	15

The Diaspora Potrzebie

Editor

Alice Ludvigsen '70
Email: alice.ludvigsen@gmail.com

Past Editors

Peter G. Gibson (Fac), Founding Editor, 1978-1986 [RIP June 6, 2009]
Connie Scott '76, Editor, 1986-1990
Jonathan G. Stacey '61, Editor 1990-2012 [RIP December 7, 2012]
Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68, Editor 2013-2020
Jay Bruder '74, Editor 2020-2021

Contributing Staff

Faten Hayek, Research & Development Officer

Executive Committee and Representatives

President, Gina Kano '73, ginakano1@gmail.com
Vice President, Daniel Harrich '18, dh2924@columbia.edu
Treasurer, Leonard Smith '67, leonard.smith@telesis-usa.com
Secretary, Donna Harms-Hansen '74, 32Aruba@comcast.net

Representatives of the Association

Yasmin Agha '04	Leslie Parker '75
Margaret Kelberer '73	Evelyn Lambert Saunders '71
Jeanie Mullin '73	Amelia Seaton '77
Ramsey Barghout '12	Glen Grubbs '71
Elizabeth van den Berg '74	Alice Ludvigsen '70
Catherine Essoyan Hopen '73	

Honorary Representatives

Thomas Cangiano, Head of School
Nina Joukowsky-Köprülü '79, Chair, ACS Board of Trustees

Ex-Officio Representative

Maya Mouhaidly, Interim Director of Development at ACS

Websites

ACS at Beirut: www.acs.edu.lb
ACS Matters: www.acs.edu.lb/page.cfm?p=1326
Al Mashriq The Levantine
Cultural Riches from the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean
<https://libraries.aub.edu.lb/digital-collections/collection/borre-webarchive>
Webmaster: The late Børre Ludvigsen '64

The Diaspora Potrzebie is published quarterly as a nonprofit activity of the Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut. Subscriptions are provided free to all members of the alumni association. Please make tax deductible donation checks payable to the Alumni Association of ACS (AA/ACS).

All address information should be sent to AA/ACS, Glen Grubbs, 20 Franklin St., Salem NH 03079. Our legal address is: 3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 8th Floor, New York NY 10017-2303. *The Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut. (AA/ACS) does not take positions on religious, political, social topics, or issues and does not endorse the positions or opinions given from time to time by contributors to this newsletter.* © 1990–2022 Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut.

All Rights Reserved.

2025 ACS TRIENNIAL REUNION

It's time to start thinking about the 2025 Triennial Reunion! Got a location idea? Are you willing to serve as our host? Please come forward. Do not worry: our experience shows that many people will be ready to pitch in to help, but we need someone to lead the effort. Helpers will come out of the woodwork - we had a blast planning the Baltimore Reunion. It's a fun, engaging process and an opportunity to connect with alumni across multi-class years.

Please reach out to either Baltimore Reunion Host Betsy van den Berg '74: evandenb@mcdaniel.edu or Alumni Council President Gina Kano '73: ginakano1@gmail.com with questions, ideas, or to volunteer.

BE A PART OF ACS HOMECOMING IN BEIRUT!

The Development and Alumni office at ACS has been brainstorming an ACS homecoming back in Lebanon! ACS homecoming is a 7- day itinerary reliving the hallways of ACS, exploring new parts of Lebanon, and bringing our timeless alumni community together back to where it all started. This trip is scheduled for Spring/Summer of 2024, as they are in the development phase the dates are to be determined.

Spots will be limited, so please email your interest or share your thoughts to Alumni Relations Officer, Nabila, contact email: nkesrewan@acs.edu.lb

See you in Beirut!

Lebanon....18(ish) Years Later Continued

The first four days were spent in Beirut, mostly walking around ACS, AUB and the Hamra area. ACS looked much the same, except for the changes to what the buildings are used for, and some interior remodeling. The BD is still called the BD, but it now houses offices and the like. The school built a new building where Kameel's was that is now used for faculty housing. But all in all, it was very familiar.

In addition to visiting the campus, I was able to attend the board of trustees meeting in person. The meeting was optimistic and informative, as it looked as though we would exceed our planned enrollment numbers for next year. In fact, that did end up happening, thanks to the hard work of Tom Cangiano and his team. It was a special treat to attend the graduation ceremony at the AUB chapel, exactly where my graduation took place 50 years ago. The class of 2023 was an impressive group of young people, headed to AUB as well as many prestigious schools in the US. The speaker was Arwa Damon (daughter of George Damon, former Head of School), who was on air at CNN, covering the Middle East. The ceremony was followed by a celebration and dinner at the St. Georges Yacht Club, which was hosted by the school. Much like our reunions, there was lots of food, dancing and fun.

Our first attempts to get into AUB, from the seaside entrances, proved unsuccessful. We were directed to various gates (there is no drive-in gate next to the football field/AUB beach like there used to be), but to no avail. Apparently, we needed to go to the main gate on Bliss to gain access, which we just didn't have the energy to do that afternoon. A walk further down the Corniche to our hotel in Ain Mreisseh, which is now a hub of restaurants, hotels, and shops, ended our first day of exploration.

The Corniche is not as dirty as I expected it to be...there were lots of people walking for exercise and the fishermen were lined up as they used to be. What I didn't realize until later was that there were no vendors selling food there. Because of COVID, they are largely absent from the streets; one really big change from the last time I was there.

We decided to walk to the AUB main gate the next day, which proved to be an escapade of sorts as we ended up taking alleyways and stairs up Clemenceau, only to stop at a manaish spot for some breakfast. Once again, we were told at the medical gate that no visitors were allowed into AUB, so our last chance was at the main gate. When we got there, I switched to Arabic with the guard, who told us that there



It was also wonderful to connect with Maya and her team at the development office at ACS in person. We had lunch with Faten, Nabila, and Maya, then followed up with other meetings and gatherings over the 4 days in Beirut. They have such a love for the school, and we have put together a great plan to continue to attract alumni of all ages into the ACS family.

were NO visitors allowed since COVID. After I explained that I went to AUB, and that my father used to be the dean of engineering, he asked who my father was. He immediately recognized his name (his father was a guard before him) and gave us a head nod to go in...and yelled after us "AND NO SMOKING ON CAMPUS!". We all laughed. AUB continues to be an oasis in a rather chaotic city. There are no longer

Continued on page 4

Lebanon....18(ish) Years Later Continued

any cars allowed in (with a few exceptions), so it's quiet, clean, and absolutely beautiful. There are some new buildings, but other than that, it was the same, or better.

For me, this was a turning point of the trip. I realized that for 40+ years of being in the US, I was not "Kanaan Kano's daughter", but in those few minutes of an exchange with the guard at the gate, I once again was. It brought an immediate sense of belonging, and of being home. My parents never really had a family home here in the US, so Beirut has always felt like home, and right then it was confirmed. My Arabic, which I don't use that often here, came back so quickly. I did search for certain words here and there, but it was easy, and I continued to get shocked looks from people when I spoke it.

The second half of our trip was spent shopping and sightseeing, mostly in the north where my family lives. We stayed in a wonderful hotel in Dbaye, where we felt so comfortable and welcome. They treated us so well, keeping track of our comings and goings, fixing us breakfast (usually a combination of the Lebanese and Continental. The highlights of this part of our trip included Byblos, Harissa, a tour of the mountain towns where our family spent many summers, and Batroun.

If you plan to go to Lebanon, it's a must-see small village on the sea, full of shops and restaurants and small hotels. It rivals the villages one pictures in parts of Greece. Just gorgeous.



Gina and Cathy, reminiscing in the courtyard.
Photo: Gina Kano.

I realized there were a few things that I came away with from this trip:

- It is home. I am still my father's daughter and a part of this large extended family that my American mother joined as a very young woman. Those connections are deep.
- The food is fantastic, and not expensive. The fruits and vegetables tasted different and fresh, and we couldn't get enough of all the local favorites.
- It felt very safe. We never felt that there was any risk beyond what we would feel here.
- The financial situation, while still precarious, was settling down as the dollar became the currency used everywhere, bringing a sense of stability to the otherwise collapse of the Lebanese lira.
- The Lebanese people, who have been through so much, are still generous, kind and welcoming to visitors, although I will admit it was helpful to speak Arabic as we navigated our way around the country.

If you're thinking about visiting Lebanon, do it!

Alumni Notes

Richie Hanna '73 (on Facebook):

I just had a wonderful and amazing long phone conversation with **Ray Ruehl (Fac)!!!** He lives north of Milwaukee and inshallah I'm going to visit him in the next year!

He showed up at ACS in 1959 after the first Lebanon Civil War at age 25 - and left around 1975 during the second Civil War! He then went to the American School in London for close to 20 years!

He sounds great, enjoys the company of a wonderful intelligent cat and multiple nephews and family nearby.

Two memorable quotes from him: "Beirut was heavenly in so many ways!" And "the secret of a happy life is loving what you do."

Ray was a very important teacher in my life as he got me involved in "First Love" and as we spent good time together at his historic home on the Mediterranean in Ain Miriesi. It

was so good to reconnect with him!!!

Here are the comments that followed:

Foteini Daphne Issidorides: What subject did Ray Ruehl teach at ACS?

- Alice Ludvigsen: *ART!! He was the ultimate Art and Art History teacher. I loved his classes. He was also instrumental in my brother becoming an architect.*

Alumni Notes

- Anne Peet: *WHAT?! He was THE Art Teacher, my dear!*
- Richard Hanna: *On the side he made movies. Including one starring me.*
- Munir Kreidie: *Art and Filmmaking. Inspired me to become an actor. A most fantastic teacher and mentor. He got me started in film. Easily one of my favorite teachers ever.*
- Sara Parrott: *Richie, Kudos to you for your loyalty and effort in tracking down your old teachers. Sadly, Joe Cardone, who taught history in the 1970s (second half), whom we discussed, passed away this year.*

Connie Scott: *I remember him coming in to McDonald's Haymarket in London when I worked there before college, after having to leave Beirut in February 1976 because of the civil war. Jaw drop! Great teacher.*

Anne Seidel Overington: *He was a guiding light for me as an artist. He brought out the best in all of us.*

Annika Åkerblad: *He was a favorite teacher! Had a great time in his classes.*

Sara Parrott: *Ray and his students made two films I especially remember. One featured a young boy, just getting interested (Very) in girls, who walks past the weight room, decorated with a poster of Charles Atlas on the wall, and sees my belly dancing students practicing. At that point Ray's student covered the camera lens with a kaleidoscope, so the film viewer sees a whirlwind of beautiful young girls dancing while the boy dreams. The other film used special effects to depict an English teacher being harassed in class by unruly students. Then he disappears into a locker and comes*

out dressed as Superman to handle a crisis. Later in the movie he's on Hamrah street, leaps into a Volkswagen in order to reappear as Superman, and apprehends the criminal. My recollection is that the Lebanese police were not happy to have an adult changing into a Lycra Superman suit in broad daylight on a busy street. Ray's talent and ingenuity were boundless.

Kathy Spencer: *I was in 8th grade in '64/65, and Mr. Ruehl brought out the art side of me. I never did much with it but it helped me assist our kids and grandkids with art projects. Really looked forward to his class.*

JoAnn Atwood: *Please send him my love. He really got me going in art, and it ended up being a huge part of my life & career. Wonderful man.*

Lisa Moore: *Thanks for letting us know. Pass along our greetings and well wishes when you see him, please.*

Robert Royce: *Nice to know he is alive and well.*

Anne Peet: *I'm delighted to hear that you were finally able to contact him. He's SO great!! And it's fantastic to know that he's well and happy. I've been out of touch for a few years, and was worried. Thanks, Richard!!*

Michael Mills: *An important teacher and mentor during my time at ACS and always will be grateful...all my best to him.*

Richard Sheridan: *Please give 'Mr. Ruehl' my regards.*

Margaret Kelberer: *So glad you are in touch!*

Sarah Rich (Fac) posted the following on Facebook on the 19th of July:



Mrs T is celebrating her **98th** birthday today by going out for a brownie sundae.

She thanks you for all your cards and email wishes. She has an amazing memory!

- Happy birthday Mrs. T! She was a huge help to me when I started 8th grade in the middle of the school year and when the transition was a challenge and I had to repeat the grade, she was there to support me. She and Mr. T were a great influence on my life. I remember Mr. T taking his glass eye out and putting it on the desk and saying I'll be watching you, when he had to leave the classroom.
- Happy birthday, Elsa! You look wonderful! I think of you often, especially at this point in my life as I reminisce about the people in my life who impacted me the most. You were the first and most consequential of those people outside of my family who

Continued on page 6

Alumni Notes

loved me and took an abiding interest in my days as a student at ACS from at least third grade through college selection. You taught me to tumble and then to share time keeping at basketball games while sitting next to you at court side. In high school you helped me negotiate “protesting”, how to volunteer to help our school and class, and, most importantly, helping me choose to which colleges I should apply (and why), and then helping me decide why I should attend Dartmouth. Thank you for loving me the way you did!

- Ditto for me, too! All of the above. All of us must have been special to her.
- Indeed we were. She made us feel like we were the most important person in her life!
- How wonderful to see Elsa looking so happy. She meant the world to my brother and me through all those years at ACS, and meeting her at reunions has been a great joy.
- Happy Happy Birthday Elsa, but I know you as Mrs. T. I also think of you ! you look great wish I could share a Sundae with you. Thank you for ALL you did for us during those very important years at ACS!!
- How beautiful she is and how kind you are to connect us all, Sarah!! My card will arrive slightly late. Gosh, how wonderful to think of her and to see her, here!! I'm lifting my glass in cheer!

Editor's comment: There are many, many more “Happy Birthday” greetings, so I have taken a printout of the whole Facebook greeting page and sent it by snail-mail to EPT, the wonderful **Elsa P. Turmelle**. This way, she can see everybody's names and emojis and enthusiasm.

Isn't it strange...

sometimes, how one picture or comment or story somehow leads to another? **Rich Thomas '66** published this picture of **Jane Monroe (Fac)** on the ACS Beirut - Alumni page on Facebook, and it generated many comments about a much-loved, well-remembered teacher at ACS in the early 1960's.



The two messages below were received as a result of that discussion, and I find it somehow serendipitous that Richard Hanna's telephone conversation with Ray Ruehl is the first post in our “Alumni News” section.

Mary Ledbetter Tabakow '63: Attached is an “Al Arz” article (with my photograph) about **Ray Ruehl, Jane Monroe, Vicky Helling's** and my misadventure in the northern Sudanese desert on a spring break trip. It is written by “spoofo-feature article” student reporter, Mark Dent, but David Kurani and others might remember him.



The text reads as follows:



DESERT DRIFTERS by Mark Dent '63

During the Spring vacation Miss Monroe, Mr. Ruehl, Vicky Helling, and Mary Ledbetter toured Egypt and The Sudan. The party had left Wadi Halfa and were returning to Semna when their rented car got firmly stuck in the sand. They had no water, they were miles from any habitation, and the road was seldom used.

Mr. Ruehl lost control of himself and became convinced that he was Lawrence of Arabia. He exhorted Misses Monroe, Ledbetter, and Helling to serve as camels so he could ride for help to the nearest Foreign Legion Post. With typical female selfishness, none volunteered. Despite Mr. Ruehl's courageous offer, we must agree that Miss Monroe was the outstanding example of cool-headed bravery. Her mind immediately farmed to mathematics as the solution to the problem. There was some trouble, however, with what formulas to use. Miss Monroe pointed out that if the car radiator held seventeen thirty-fifths of a gallon of water and antifreeze in a five-to-two ratio, then only a half-pint more antifreeze need be added to protect the engine at a forty-six below zero temperature. Just as they all thought they were safe at last, Mr. Ruehl ruined everything by staggering up and announcing that there wasn't any water and antifreeze in the radiator, because he had drunk it all. He hiccupped politely and declared that antifreeze on an empty stomach had quite some kick, then staggered off.

Undiscouraged, Miss Monroe considered the fact that if it took one person four days to walk to the nearest water, then the four people should be able to walk that far in a single day. This study was just on the verge of yielding the secret to the party's dilemma

Alumni Notes

when Miss Monroe ran out of fingers and toes, and was forced to give up the problem.

Suddenly Mr. Ruehl returned to the arena of mathematical struggle and stated that he could walk on water. Miss Monroe declared this to be of no immediate value. Mr. Ruehl could hardly be expected to put up with so unreasonable a point of view, and began arguing. The four tourists were soon so engrossed in the argument, that if their car's driver had not hailed the passing automobile the group would probably never have been picked up.

Vicky (Helling) Olson '63: Talking about **Miss Monroe** made me remember this photo that was taken on our exciting spring trip to Egypt. **Mary Ledbetter** and I were the chaperones for our two teachers.

One of the highlights of my life.



L-R: Ray Ruehl, Mary Ledbetter, Vicky Helling, Jane Monroe. Photo by: Vicky (Helling) Olson

Jane Monroe: "I traveled everywhere, all the countries in the Middle East: Egypt and into Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, India and all over Europe. I had been at the site of almost every Roman ruin from the Coast of Spain to Iraq. A lot of trips were weekend trips; take a taxi to Damascus and then change cars and go to Jerusalem. Travel was mostly by car. One time, three of us went in a VW Bug to the source of the Euphrates River in

the spring, and the roads would be mostly flooded from the seasonal deluge. We came to a fork in the road in the middle of God knows where, and as we got out of the car we heard the air coming out of the tire. We waited there until it came time for the men to head home from work. When they crested from up over the hill in the distance, we felt so fortunate. A group of them picked up the car, carried it across the water and changed our tire. It was really incredible. That was a two week trip in the spring since each year we got two weeks at Christmas, two weeks in the Spring and then all summer."

The community school where Prof. Monroe worked was a boarding school and the parents were also in residence. "We ate with them and after dinner we would have these slide showing contests cause everyone was always going out to find adventures and doing crazy things. On weekends you could go to the mountains or go to the coast. It was great." After five years in the Middle East, Prof. Monroe returned to the States.

(From an article in Columbia Teachers College's Human Development Newsletter, Summer 2010, announcing Jane Monroe's retirement.)

Sadly, it appears that Jane Monroe passed away in February 2021. Her obituary and a more comprehensive description of her life will be included in our next issue, thanks to **Chris Lund '64**.

Otherwise, this seems to be a summer of many mini-reunions. Here are a few that have reached us:

Craig Lichtenwallner '70, June 17: Writing to you from Beirut where Sean and I have been having a delightful visit, staying at Hotel Lost in Gemmayzeh. We've walked

the town and seen the sights, having met up with Rae, Mishka, Ramzi, etc. You can go ahead and sling a little piece into the Pot and I attach this picture from Jbeil.

Yalla, wish you were here!



Mary Ann Whitney-Hall '75 and **Peggy Williams '75** are avid nature lovers and photographers and old friends. They just had a wonderful trip high in the Rockies with their husbands, Ken and Jay



Jay Moore '72, July 31: Got to see my buddy **Dan 'Omar' Cherif '72** in Iowa this weekend. The photo below pretty much sums up the solemn nature of the visit.

Continued on page 8

Alumni Notes



L-R: Dan and Jay

John Nelson and **Bob Foster** (both **FAC**) finally got to meet again on a long-planned, but twice cancelled (because of COVID) cruise of the Rhine and Mosel rivers. They have travelled together with friends to many places, for many years, and have no plans to stop any time soon.



John Nelson and Bob Foster reunited.
Photo: Alice Ludvigsen

Alice Ludvigsen '70, **René Hopen '73** and **Mary (Tronstad) Gusdal '74**, who all grew up in Sidon, and attended ACS together, had a wonderful reunion in the Netherlands in July, staying with René and **Cat Essoyan '73**. René, Cat, their son Bjorn, and **Noreen O'Donnell '73** then did a road trip to Norway in August, and happened to visit Alice while they were there. René also got to visit with Mary and her brother **Arne Tronstad '72**. The two guys hadn't seen each other since Lebanon, and had a happy reunion.



Alice, Mary and René in Holland, photo by Cat.



Bjorn, Cat, Noreen and René in front of the Munch Museum in Oslo.
Photo: Alice Ludvigsen

It seems we are getting better and better at visiting each other, the older we get.



René Hopen, Mary Tronstad, Arne Tronstad
Photo: Mary Tronstad

Munir Kreidie '78 took his son with him and went back "home" for the first time in many years. He has promised to share his travel diary with us in the next issue. In the meantime, here he is in the courtyard



Munir Kreidie in the courtyard.
Photo by: his son

In Memoriam



Janet Johnson Gillies '52

May 15, 1935 – May 1, 2023

Janet Gillies passed away peacefully on May 1, 2023 with family by her side at Rose Court on the Campus of Maris Grove in Glen Mills, PA. She leaves behind her loving husband of 62+ years, three children, Amanda Gillies, Ralph Gillies and Karen Gillies Kitabwalla, and two grandchildren, Matilda Kitabwalla and Hani Kitabwalla and son-in-law, Husein

Kitabwalla, two brothers, Allen Johnson and Peter Johnson and sister-in-law Susan Johnson, widow of Janet's brother Lathrop who pre-deceased.

Janet led an interesting life with numerous stories to tell: travelling around the world before the age of five as her parents served as Christian teaching missionaries in Tehran, Iran in the 1930's, then in 1939 travelling east through India, China and Japan as the war began in Europe to reach home in the U.S. After several years in public schools in Kansas City, MO where her father was Head Pastor at the Second Presbyterian Church, the family headed back to the Middle East in 1948 to Beirut, Lebanon when father became liaison for the Church Missionary Board. High School in Beirut, returning to college at Wellesley in Massachusetts (studying history and international relations, life-long interests) and back to Beirut where she taught history to Arab girls for two years. Then to Boston working for the Mission Board. During this time, she met husband-to-be, Chuck Gillies. Her Middle East experiences made her a life-long strong supporter of Palestinian rights and interpreter of Islam to the Judeo-Christian world.

Married life continued the mixture of international and at home experiences. First in 1961-63 teaching with Chuck with Teachers for East Africa in Moshi, Tanganyika (now Tanzania) where Amanda was born, then supporting Chuck with his teaching and headmaster career with stints in Rockland County NY, where Ralph was born, Princeton, NJ where Karen was born to Evanston, Illinois, then overseas, again to Brussels, Belgium, where Chuck was Headmaster at the International School of Brussels, then to Traverse City, MI, Blairstown, New Jersey, Amherst and Easthampton, MA and finally, close to where she was born in Philadelphia, to Glen Mills, PA. Besides being a supportive faculty and headmaster's wife she pursued a variety of teaching experiences at the high school, college and

community level. She also mastered a variety of fiber arts – from creative knitting projects for family and school fund-raisers, to natural dyeing to macrame and, finally to what she considered the 'pinnacle' of those arts – bobbin lace, an interest begun while living in Brussels. In addition, she did interesting community work, first, while in Illinois as a local leader of an effort to publicize the experience of the French "voyagers," who first opened and settled the mid-west (which inspired many family canoeing adventures) then as leader of a "before its time" program on alternative energy at an ecology center in Evanston, IL including the building of solar panels in the 1970's, a project she wrote a book about.

Janet and Chuck had been married for more than 62 years when she passed.



Janet and her friend Mary Roberts at the top of the Great Pyramids.



Sheryl Littlefield '67

It is always difficult saying goodbye to someone we love and cherish. Family and friends must say goodbye to their beloved Sheryl Littlefield (Charleston, West Virginia), born in Boone, North

Carolina, who passed away at the age of 72, on July 5, 2021.

She was predeceased by : her parents, Broadus Edgar "Pete" and Ruth McClain Littlefield; and her sister Trudy Meyers.



Sheryl in the ACS 1967 yearbook.

Continued on page 10

In Memoriam

She is survived by : her daughter Jessi Butler; her grandchildren, Ema Bushnell and Max Bushnell; her nephew Justin Meyers; her brother John Littlefield; her brother-in-law John Meyers; her niece Melissa Littlefield; and her nephew Jonathon Littlefield.

Gail Hawkins '63

November 7, 1945 - July 7, 2023

Message from **Blaine Chandler '77**:

"My sister Gail passed away on July 7th after a long courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Her sons Glenn and Craig wrote the obit that appeared in the local paper The Idaho Statesman on July 11th. She was one of a lucky few that attended ACS from Kindergarten through 12th grade."



Boise, Idaho - In the afternoon of July 7th, Gail Chandler Hawkins of Boise died peacefully at home surrounded by her family at the age of 77.

Gail was born in November of 1945 to William Reeder "Bill" Chandler and Clair Beatrice Chandler in San Francisco. With older sister Barbara, the family relocated to Beirut, Lebanon, where Gail spent much of

her childhood and brother Blaine was subsequently born. She spoke often about the beauty of the Mediterranean Sea along the corniche and the juxtapositions of ancient and modern, East and West, poverty and opulence.

After graduating from American Community School in Beirut, Gail received a bachelor's degree from Stanford University and a master's degree in education from George Washington University. Gail spent most of her career in the IT industry, including several years in Seoul, Korea, where her two sons, Glenn and Craig, were born. Coming back to the States, the family relocated to Boise, Idaho, to be close to parents Bill and Clair and brother Blaine. Gail enjoyed a 17-year career with Micron, and finished her working life with the Special Olympics and International Rescue Committee.

Gail explored the freedom and expression of dance as a lifelong passion. She first started dancing as a child in Beirut when her parents were out and she had the apartment to herself, finally able to allow her body to do what it wanted. While she loved folk and traditional dance, such as the Lebanese Dabke, Gail was most inspired by the intuition and personal creativity of improvisational and modern dance, performing with local companies and participating in workshops from luminaries such as Kei Takei. In recent years, Gail found a home with Open Arms Dance Project, performing with her friends on stage and in video since 2011.

Gail also found expression through poetry. "Breathe" and "Acquainted with the Night" from her collection Just Saying were transformed into videos featuring local dancers and artists. An avid reader, Gail was particularly moved by The Forty Days of Musa Dagh, a historical novel about one Armenian community's composure, love, and resistance in the midst of the chaos of war.

With her thoughtfulness and sensitivity, Gail kindled and grew close



Gail and Blaine at the Centennial Reunion in Beirut in 2005. Photo: Alice Ludvigsen

friendships that lasted decades. She faced life's challenges with grace and determination. Her radiant smile and heartfelt laugh were infectious. Gail's gentle kindness and sincerity touched many.

Gail is preceded in death by her parents and sister Barbara. Survivors include brother Blaine, two sons Glenn and Craig, and cousins Skip, Camilla, and

Mary Helen. The family wishes to thank Glenn's wife Gao Xue, Blaine's fiancé Margaret, our angels at Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and Open Arms Dance Project, and our friends Sharon Christoph and Carol Ogburn for their love and support.

Mounir Khalil Chami passed away on December 13, 2022. He was an Arabic teacher at ACS up until 1975. When the war intervened, he and his wife, Susan Hughes Chami, moved to the United States since ACS no longer had students for both of them to teach. Both of us loved teaching at ACS.

Mounir's natural charisma and generosity is greatly missed by his family and friends.

Gratefully,

Susan Chami



MOUNIR & SUSAN CHAMI NICK KABONICK

ACS Couples

Tim Smith '75 and Sheila Graham Smith '73



We met at the Beirut port in 1961, but we got to know each other in the sand box at the Beirut Baptist School (BBS). Tim's family temporarily lived one floor up from my family in the missionary residence on the BBS campus while his parent's studied Arabic before going to Jordan.

One of my earliest memories of us together

is sailing paper boats in the sandbox puddles after one of those infamous Mediterranean gully washer rainstorms. We attended BBS together; he in nursery and me in first grade. I should have known with such an auspicious sandbox beginning, that we would eventually end up together "playing" in the dirt in our own backyard 60 plus years later! The picture of us riding on the back of the donkey was at the expat 1961 Fourth of July picnic that the embassy put on. We used this picture as our engagement announcement!

The following year, the Graham girls joined my big brother at ACS because my mom wanted us to experience an English language school before furlough in the US. Gratefully, on return from the US, I re-enrolled at ACS in the 5th grade. In the meantime, Tim attended ACS in Jordan, but during the Jordanian civil war, began Beirut ACS for the eighth grade, and continued through high school. We were good buddies during this time, but he was two years behind me in school and you know how that goes!!! Tim also grew close to my dad with their common love for history and archeology. They had many in depth conversations about which I was vaguely aware.

After my high school graduation, Tim and I lost personal touch and only reconnected at my dad's funeral. I had been divorced after a 25-year marriage. Fortunately, one of my boys was already on his own and the other one had a year left in college.

As is normal protocol at funerals, family and close friends were hosted for dinner after the services. This red-headed man who I didn't recognize, walked up to me and gave me a hug. Just as we connected, I exclaimed, "Oh Timmy, it's so nice to see you!" He whispered in my ear with a chuckle, "Sheila, no one calls me Timmy anymore!"

That's how our conversations started, and they haven't stopped since! I guess that hug was quite impactful, because after emails and long phone calls back and forth, we started long distance dating and married after a year. Tim moved from Houston to Waco where I was executive staff/faculty at Baylor University. He began a new career in nursing after having worked twenty years as a senior engineering and construction scheduler for Fluor. Tim added an RN degree to his education and spent the rest of his career as a hospice nurse and working for the State of Texas.

We've been married 22 years and still act like goofy newlyweds. We are now retired and love it! We garden together and enjoy hosting friends and family, especially grandchildren. Tim is an incredible carpenter and has a full shop out of which emerge beautiful works of art, especially anything for which the grandchildren wish!



Continued on page 12

ACS Couples Continued

This second half of my life with Tim is like being on an endless holiday where our souls speak to each other, our minds connect, and our goals hold hands. It's also quite endearing to have conversations in both English and Arabic, depending on what suits the topic! We are so grateful to have found each other again. I highly recommend marrying your best friend and an ACS alum to boot!

Photos with comments, by Lynne:



Our Story - Lynne Moukerizi and Jeff Harstedt

Story by Jeff:

Lynne and I met in Saudi Arabia in the 7th grade. I can still remember what she was wearing the first time I saw her...

(short, purple corduroy skirt with little yellow flowers...and loafers).

We came to ACS as a couple and spent four wonderful years there together...After ACS, I often flew up from Northwestern to UNH to visit Lynne...I went back to Saudi and worked with Peter Gibson for a year...And as I was going to Bemidji State and UMKC Lynne was working for Raytheon in Massachusetts

and we kept in close touch. I joined the Navy as a journalist for six years and...We were recently doing some "Swedish Death Cleaning" and, my God, we both had saved probably every love letter and card we exchanged during those years. To make a long story short we got married in San Diego just before I got out of the Navy and that

was 38 years ago. I got my master's and have been teaching ever since...We have a wonderful son and daughter-in-law...And, during this relationship that has spanned 56 years, Lynne remains the most beautiful, smart, witty and caring person I was lucky enough to fall in love with.



This has been on our bedroom dresser along with the wedding photo, for 38 years.



Last year our son was married to a wonderful girl. I was unable to attend as I was in the hospital, but Jeff was there representing us.



This is us in one of Glen Grubb's back yard bbq's.

ACS Couples Continued

Kathy Morley Spencer class '69 **Charley Spencer class of '68**

Kathy and I met in the fall of 1964, Kathy was in 8th grade and a commuter and I was a freshman and in the boarding department. Kathy's dad was in the Foreign Service and stationed at the embassy in Beirut and my dad was a consulting engineer living in Ahwaz, Iran. Kathy's brother Kevin and sister Karen both attended ACS as did my older brother Lou who was a senior in 1964. I was pals with Kathy's brother as he was also a freshman, and I met Kathy through Kevin. At the time I mostly hung out with Kevin, Tom Najemy, Phil Davies, Dave Neal, and Don Maxwell. On occasion I would visit Kevin and Kathy at their parents' apartment which was right next to the ACS ball fields. (My recollection is that visiting private apartments was not allowed for BD students however).

At the end of the school year, we went our separate ways, I went back to the States and Kathy went to Ankara, Turkey, and then to



Kathy and Charley in the Alps.
Photo: Kathy



Kathy and Charley in the Rockies.
Photo: Kathy

George C. Marshall High School in Falls Church, VA. During high school at TC Williams in Alexandria, VA I attended several small reunions at the Albright's house but don't recall seeing Kathy or Kevin at the time. While attending Ga Tech in Atlanta, GA I would drive through northern VA to visit with Kevin on the way to stay with my parents who had relocated to Princeton, NJ. During one of these visits, in the spring of 1971 Kathy and I became reacquainted in Falls Church, VA while she was working for the State Department/USAID. A romance began with Kathy coming to Atlanta in 1972 when I started graduate school and we were married in June of 1974. Our honeymoon trip was a trip around the world for 11 months with extended stops in Taipei, Taiwan where Kathy's family was while her dad was stationed in Vietnam and to my brother Lou's place in Ahwaz where he had begun to teach school.

Kathy graduated from the University of TN and worked as a para-

Continued on page 14

ACS Couples Continued

legal. We have 2 girls and a boy (adopted from Vietnam) who are all adults now and 2 amazing grandchildren. We still travel some but mostly in the US. Kathy's mom (Marion Morley) lives in Tucson, AZ and we visit her as often as possible. Kevin lives in Northern VA, Karen in Suwanee, GA and my other three brothers live in Charlotte, San Diego, and Tucson.

We have been together now for 51 years, most of it in Chattanooga, TN, while I worked at the Tennessee Valley Authority for 40 years. I now run a non-profit, TN Valley Robotics, that supplies robotics equipment and training to teachers for their STEM classrooms and afterschool robotics clubs.

Becky Sibley '70 and Cliff Barnard '69



Becky was a boarder, Cliff was a day student. They met at the Locomotive, one of the coolest places in town, in February 1968. Becky and her sister, Debra Jan '68, had been "signed out" of the BD by their mother while she visited Beirut, and grabbed the chance to head out and dance at La Loco, the place to be on a weekend night. That handsome junior on the basketball team was there, love was in the air, and the rest is history.

Cliff graduated in 1969, went off to Lake Forest College, along with the Nelsons (John and Anne) and stayed there for a year. Becky's roommate can attest to a steady stream of letters going back and forth between Illinois and Lebanon and Iran. Before going back to the US for college, Becky wanted to do a year of Spanish at the university in Madrid, so Cliff did a year of French in Aix-en-Provence, and they spent that year travelling back and forth between Spain and France, which were a little bit closer than the US and Lebanon. Eventually, they settled down to study at the University of Colorado in Boulder, and that's where they still live.

Cliff became a lawyer, Becky worked with international students at UOC, and while they were doing this, they had two lovely children; Nathan in 1985 and Hilary in 1988.

The years have gone by, the kids have grown up, Becky is retired, Cliff almost, and they spend much of their time travelling; with friends, visiting friends and opening up their home to friends.



The Wedding, August 3, 1974, on Flagstaff Mountain.

(Penned by a friend...)



Becky and Cliff with their little ones.



Nathan and Hilary, all grown up.



On one of many trips, this one to Paris.



A happy reunion with Peter Jespersen '69 during a visit to Oslo in May 2023.

ACS Couples Continued



**A celebration of 48 years of marriage, August 3 2022,
Flagstaff Mountain, Boulder CO Photo: Alice Ludvigsen**

How to Stay Connected Save This Page

- The Executive Committee
 - President, Gina Kano '73, ginakano1@gmail.com
 - Vice President, Daniel Harrich '18, dh2924@columbia.edu
 - Treasurer, Leonard Smith '67, leonard.smith@telesis-usa.com
 - Secretary, Donna Harms-Hansen '74, 32Aruba@comcast.net
- Email the alumni association: alumni@acs.edu.lb. Use this link to update your street or email address or request the electronic *Pot* only.
- Social Media



ACS, Beirut - Alumni



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut

- Diaspora Potrzebie Archives
You may visit the *Pot* archives on the school website. We digitized over 40 years of back issues, and they are searchable: acs.edu.lb/POT.
Password: Alumni_Pass_ACS Visit the ACS school website: acs.edu.lb.
- Donate here by credit card: www.acs.edu.lb/page.cfm?p=1805
- Donate here by check, payable to AA/ACS: Gina Kano, 1920 McKinney Way Unit 17L, Seal Beach, CA 90740