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A Question of Character

Dr. George H. Damon, Headmaster

“ACS reaffirms its commitment to developing a lifelong engagement in learning as well as the leadership qualities and personal integrity needed to contribute positively in an increasingly complex global society.”

(ACS Mission Statement)

What are the leadership qualities and personal integrity stated in our Mission? Leadership is composed of competence and character which lead to achieving results in a manner that inspires trust. At ACS, students are expected to work on both of these branches of leadership, building capabilities in many areas, exhibiting results, reflecting on behavior, and practicing integrity. Specifically, ACS has an articulated character education program which starts in the Early Years and continues through twelfth grade. Starting with student led conferences in the Early Years, character formation is the reflection on behavior as it impacts oneself and others. We are, in the words of educator Rick Ackerley, “in the business of growing self-confident learners who have a sense of their own mission in the world and who can merge desires with the needs and wants of others.” (Independent School, Spring 2011 p. 60)

Walking about the school, one sees evidence of students in leadership roles. Early Years students are making cookies in their classes to sell for a community service project and are practicing specific values and virtues. Elementary students are investing time reflecting on ways to improve the environment and work on targeted virtues. Middle school students do community service projects both as an extra-curricular club and in their advisories. The high school is rife with group ventures and individuals exhibiting leadership, from the Honor Council to the various community service, MUN and International Baccalaureate programs. ”

Our character education program includes the importance of integrity. How does one work to improve integrity? Stephen M.R. Covey in The Speed of Trust (p.66) indicates five ways to improve integrity. Adults must model these for children and recognize when children are struggling to improve or understand integrity.

• Do I genuinely try to be honest in all my interactions with others?
• Do I typically “walk the talk”?
• Am I clear on my values? Do I feel comfortable standing up for them?
• Am I open to the possibility of learning new truths that may cause me to rethink issues or even redefine my values?
• Am I able to consistently make and keep commitments to myself?

Two of the greatest challenges each of us face is to practice integrity and to exhibit humility. True leadership is exhibited by these virtues. The daily upheavals that are shaking countries around the world are partially caused by the dichotomy between people’s aspirations to be recognized and their own capabilities. At ACS, students immediately begin to work on both of these branches of leadership, building capabilities in many areas, exhibiting results, reflecting on behavior, and practicing integrity.

Lebanon as a Classroom

Jason Crook, Environmental Systems and Biology Teacher

“I have seen God!”, came the exclamation from the first student to round the bluffs and see the waterfall in all its springtime splendor. After a short hike up from Hammana, the Senior Environmental Systems students had reached the origin of the Nahr Chaghour to begin their fieldwork in water and soil assessment. The ten students set about their tasks to determine the quality of the water rushing by them and the chemical and physical characteristics of the soil in the area. Despite the cool, and inspired by the beautiful natural surroundings, these young ecologists had their first taste of fieldwork and welcomed the opportunity to apply some of their conceptual knowledge to the local environment. One student wrote, “The field trip to Hammana was fun and very educational. I learned and saw things that I never knew and never knew existed in Lebanon, like the waterfall I fell into. I can’t wait for the next field trip!”

The next field trip may not have been as beautiful but it was certainly just as educational. In mid-February, the class was hosted by Sukleen in their corporate offices near the port. Students were introduced to the idea of an integrated waste management system and to the quantities of waste collected and sorted, in excess of 2000 tons per day. From there, it was on to Choufisaf and a local company that recycles plastic and nylon.

All of these seniors’ hard work recently culminated in a camping excursion and some final fieldwork at the new ACS Outdoor Education Center located outside Deir al Qamar. They braved the elements to complete fieldwork of their own design and began to make baseline readings of the new site. Whether sampling the two non-permanent ponds, estimating biodiversity or exploring ground cover, all students were able to explore research questions of their own creation. This final lab project brought together all the lab skills and content knowledge gained during the past two years. It also allowed students to connect with the natural environment in a way that few had done before.

Students were able to see Lebanon beyond the blacktop and high rises of the urban environment. Lebanon has magical natural environments if one takes the time to find them. These senior students have taken the opportunity to discover new aspects of Lebanon’s natural environment and have gained new insights into the natural world, and a greater understanding of their own capabilities.

A Question of Character

Dr. George H. Damon

• Wisdom = Good Judgment
• Justice = Respecting the rights of all persons
• Fortitude = Doing what is right in the face of difficulty
• Temperance = Ability to govern ourselves
• Love = Willingness to sacrifice for the sake of another
• Positive attitude = an asset to yourself and others
• Hard Work = no substitute for hard work
• Integrity = adhering to a moral principle to be ‘whole’ so that what we say and do in different situations is consistent rather than contradictory
• Gratitude = choose to be thankful
• Humility = pressing our abilities into service without attracting attention or expecting applause

• Humility = pressing our abilities into service without expecting applause
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• Temperance = Ability to govern ourselves
• Fortitude = Doing what is right in the face of difficulty
• Wisdom = Good Judgment

From the ACS Mission Statement:

“…Athletics, the visual and performing arts, extra-curricular activities and community service are integral components of an ACS education. In the high school, ACS provides a rigorous college preparatory course of study including the Lebanese and International Baccalaureate Programs.”
**Student Activities Matters**

**Daily Star**

Rayan El Masri, Grade 11

When we, the Aleph Be school newspaper team, were informed that we were going to visit The Daily Star, the leading source of Lebanese and regional news to English-speaking readers in Beirut, we were excited to say the least. This was our chance to see how professionals manage to work together and publish a newspaper every day, something we struggle to accomplish a couple of times each year.

We arrived in Gemmayze at the beginning of our Co-Curricular block and were escorted into the Marine Tower where the Daily Star offices are located on the 6th floor. We were greeted by Marlin Dick, one of the main editors, who began our tour by talking to us about the descending reputation of newspapers. Due to several competitive factors, including the rise of television and internet, newspapers aren’t what they used to be. The internet is taking a lot of readers out of the newspaper market because it offers free and easily accessible news to readers worldwide. Because of the loss of ad revenue and an increase in competitive newspapers, publications like the Daily Star are beginning to follow general trends like adding more of a magazine touch to their print publication and concentrating more on their web page design.

The Arabic team in Early Years created an Arabic center next to the KG1 A snack area to motivate children and to help develop their oral skills in Arabic. This pioneer project was inspired by a need to create a real-life situation that offers opportunities for students to interact using their senses and expressing themselves in the target language.

All materials in this area were related to the project in question-“Sea Animals”: aquarium, fish (real and unreal), real star fish, water, net, boat, shells, information books, sea animals game, big floor sea puzzle, art material, sand box, students’ work, blue light and more.

This center will be used with every project. Each time it will be decorated and designed according to the topic, creating an environment for children to interact using Standard Arabic.

The children are looking forward to our next center: Fruit and Vegetables market.

**Mass Movement**

Ramzi Kaiss, Grade 10

Teri Guillemots once said, “dancing faces you towards Heaven, whichever direction you turn”.

On February 10, 2011, the ACS freshmen and sophomores participated in a mass movement show on the ACS field. Students performed simple movements and a few hip hop steps to the beat of a heart-pumping R & R song. This mass movement performance, choreographed by Mrs. Rima Ghannah Rahawi, enabled the students to learn the essence of movement, and the skills needed to accomplish the last figure forming the sun shape.

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**“Under the Sea” Arabic Corner**

Caroline Hamadeh and Siham Kabakibi, Early years Arabic teachers

The Arabic team in Early Years created an Arabic center next to the KG1 A snack area to motivate children and to help develop their oral skills in Arabic. This pioneer project was inspired by a need to create a real-life situation that offers opportunities for students to interact using their senses and expressing themselves in the target language.

“Under the Sea” was the first corner to be created this year. KG1 A, B, C and KG2 A, B, C visited this area on regular bases during Arabic classes. They were involved in the following activities:

- Hands on activities
- Art activities
- Science activities
- Math activities
- Read aloud
- Research
- Observation of real sea animals

Students work was also displayed in this corner for the parents to see and celebrate progress.
The Show Goes On

Yasmina Farha ’05

For most ACS alumni, the best part of growing up was being at school. I guess that’s why time after time when asked to return, we come running. The ACS Fashion Knight 2011 was an all time hit among alumni and other attendees.

Walking through the gate, we passed through beautifully draped fabric into a glamorous blast from the past. Chinese lanterns hung from wall to wall and tall tables were decorated with the prettiest spring color variations. From popcorn and cotton candy to fabulously decorated headbands, it was block party heaven. The stage was surrounded by white cloth covered chairs and supported with a magically lit background. Two entertaining MC’s, Sergio Kays ’08 and Dyala Badran ’06, hyped up the crowd with their witty remarks, fun jokes, and memories from High School days. The talented Mishaal Zahran ’07, a.k.a. DJ Mish, pumped the mood with the best hits of today. Backstage were the models - current students and alumni - who came together to strut their stuff on the catwalk.

To begin, girls were dressed in clothes from Cream, Birdcage and Label Queen, boutiques owned by ACS graduates Dana Abou Jamra ’99, Lama Jammal ’99, and Karen Zaatan ’04, respectively. They also appeared in Royal Threads and Designs by Tala, designed by Nora Habbal ’08 and Tala Habbal ’00, Sacamain by Faten Sinno Kanafani ’92, clothes from Kitsch and headbands from House of Mist by Tala Makki ’07. ABC Stores decked the girls out in M by Missoni, Maje and Sandro. They looked stunning, bringing both fun and pretty to the ACS Street.

The boys were snazzy in ABC Stores’ GANT, McGregor, and Tommy Hilfiger, as well as fresh clothes from Kitsch. With an aura of confidence and character, one couldn’t help but be enchanted by these guys.

The children were adorable, decked out in the latest fashions from: Cookie Dough, Yasmin Agha’s (’04) boutique; ABC Stores’ Tommy Hilfiger, Boss, Monalisa, Sonia Rykiel, and American Outfitters. They brought cute and cool to the catwalk.

Last but not least, this event would not have come together if it weren’t for the hard and efficient work of the organizers - Danai El Hajj Ibrahim ’06, Nayla Abouzahr ’12, Tala Makki ’07, Meera Dagher ’12, Zalfa Farah ’09, Issa Kandil ’06 (Art Director), Leen Sadder ’05 (Graphic Designer), and the entire Development & Alumni Affairs Office.

ACS Fashion Knight 2011 helped us appreciate the beauty of ACS once again by reuniting us, the community, for fun and a good cause. A huge Thank You to those who donated, participated, and attended the Fashion Knight 2011. Thanks to you, we were able to raise enough funds to cover 91% of a High School student’s tuition!! This show was truly glamorous.

Be sure you are part of the fun next year!
Building my molecule

Dania Maaliki Tarabishi, IB-HS Chemistry Teacher, Science Department Head and Grade 12 Coordinator

Each year in the Chemical Bonding unit, Grade 10 Chemistry students are assigned a project in which they are required to build a molecule of their choice using materials found at home. Although students can choose any molecule, there are certain requirements and criteria they must take into consideration for the assessment: solidity; correct relative bond lengths; correct molecular shape; exact bond angles; correct relative atom sizes; correct formula; appropriate presentation/neatness. Creativity is a bonus and while some students choose the safest way out by selecting a simple molecule, others challenge themselves by constructing molecules with multiple central atoms. When such molecules pass the solidity and correct bond angles test, it is a great achievement!

Correct models can be seen hanging from the ceiling in the chemistry lab. Not only do they add color to the room, they are good teaching and demonstration tools when the shapes of molecules are discussed in class. This is, in fact, the first thing that catches the students’ attention when they enter the lab. These student projects trigger the curiosity and interest for chemistry in other students.

Karina Makarem wrote in her chemistry journal: “This project was very fun and interesting for me. I enjoyed it very much. It was interesting to actually go through doing the school work side to side it and then making it a real life model. This would be my favorite project so far. I think I did very well on it.”

Ozone Monitoring at ACS

Jason Crook, Environmental Systems and Biology Teacher

Most people are familiar with the term ozone. Perhaps you have heard of the hole that materializes every October through December over the southern hemisphere, increasing the risk of skin cancer as a result of additional ultraviolet radiation reaching the Earth’s surface. Ozone is also present at ground level and is a major factor in photochemical smog. ACS, working with the Global Ozone (GO3) Project (go3project.com), will soon receive an ozone monitor and an associated weather station to begin local readings for ozone. This information will be entered into an international database that presents global data on an overlay at Google Earth.

This equipment will provide an exciting research experience for middle and high school students. It will: increase awareness of environmental concerns; teach students important concepts such as chemical measurement methods, instrumentation, calibration, data acquisition using computers, data quality, statistics, data analysis and graphing; posting of data to the web, the chemistry of air pollution, stratospheric ozone depletion and global climate change. In addition, ACS will network with a high school in Telluride, Colorado to share data and experiences.
The Process of Investigation in Science
Simon Barakat, Science Facilitator, Middle School and Grade 8 science teacher

Grade eight students have been very busy for the last three months investigating, experimenting, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, and writing scientific reports on various chemistry topics. These range from the Law of Conservation of Mass to solubility of sodium chloride in water and the use of indicators and probes to test for the pH of different acids and bases. That is what science is all about! The students’ outcome was highly impressive.

Solubility Experiment
Tala El Hajj, Grade 8

My partner and I indulged in the experiment following procedure and collecting data, hoping to find out the why behind it and reach the right conclusion. What is a solution? What is solubility? What is NaCl and its solubility in water? What is the effect of temperature? What is percent concentration? What is a solute and what is a solvent? This experiment wrapped up all these questions with a satisfying answer that will make you say: “That really makes sense.” and I could comment back, saying: “This is the beauty of science… it makes sense.”

A solution is a homogenous mixture that consists of one or more solutes, and solvents. A solute is what dissolves in a solvent. The solvent is always present in the greatest quantity. Water has been referred to as the “universal solvent” because it can dissolve many different solutes. Solubility is the measure of how much solute can be dissolved in a solvent. If the solubility of a solution is low, then it is referred to be insoluble. If the solubility of a solution is high, then it is referred to be soluble. In this experiment, distilled water is the solvent dissolving the solute, NaCl (table salt).

In this experiment, we collected data and calculated the percent concentration of sodium chloride in water at different temperatures. We collected our results and were ready to write a scientific report which we thought will be like any other one we had before. Graphing data? On Excel? That was something new that we had to learn. Mr. Barakat taught us how to use it. It ended up being simple and straightforward once we knew what to do. Looking at data in a graph format helped us better understand the relationship between temperature and solubility.

Experiments are a very interesting way to learn new material and new skills in science, although they are very demanding, especially when it comes to writing a scientific report.

Red Cabbage Juice:
An Acid and a Base Indicator
Lynn Soueid, Grade 8

An indicator is a substance that changes color depending on how acidic or basic the solution is. Wonders like this make you think about the fascination of different molecules that lie in these types of substances. Is it that complicated? No, the answer is simple. It could be as simple as the substance Flavin, present in red cabbage juice, which makes it an incredible indicator. It changes to different colors depending on the strengths of the acid and the base. Something that you think is so complex could end up being a simple molecule. It’s miraculous. It all depends on the concentration of ions. There are a bunch of examples of indicators—litmus paper is one. Litmus paper is a type of paper that when put in a basic solution changes color from red to blue, and when put in an acidic solution changes color from blue to red. A way to know how strong or how weak a solution is by looking at the pH scale. A pH scale is a scale that determines how acidic or basic a solution is depending on its color. The scale consists of the numbers from 0-14, 0 being a very strong acid, 14 being a very strong base, and 7 being neutral.

Experiments are an amazing way to learn. PowerPoint presentations, books and notes aren’t always the answer to getting into a student’s head, trust me. The beauty of science lies in between the lines, not on them. We have learned a lot of new concepts as well as new skills in this chemistry unit. Mixing chemicals was so much fun. Experiments are the key to the success of learning.

It’s not magic, it’s just science!
Art Matters

Raouf Rifai Visits Nursery Students

Summer Charara, Nursery B Teacher

On February 2, 2011, Raouf Rifai, a well known artist, visited our Nursery classroom. Mr. Rifai’s works of art have been displayed in the galleries of many cities around the world. Our Nursery children were attentive and focused on Mr. Rifai as he demonstrated how he creates his paintings. When completed, he donated a painting he did in front of the children to each Nursery classroom. The children reflected on his artistic skills and discussed the materials he used to design his work. Nursery children have been visiting the art studio and experimenting with some of the techniques they saw Mr. Rifai use. Some of the comments heard from the students were: “Mr. Raouf did a painting for us.” “He made a face.” “He drew a flower like a garden. He did a lot of colors on his T-shirt. He has a colorful T-shirt. He make bird on his head.”

ACS Student Art Work Gains Prominence in Beirut

Mary McKone, IB Visual Arts Teacher

The art scene in Lebanon has begun to offer artists new opportunities to show their work to the general public in the form of competitions. ACS art students have taken advantage of these opportunities, and the results have been very positive!

Dayana Houry, a first year digital photography student, was nominated as a semi-finalist in the Beirut based Spreadminds “Mosaic Ashrafi International Photography Contest”. This was the organization’s second international photography contest, following last year’s successful “Lakum Hamra2ikum wa Lihmara2i” contest in Hamra. Images of Dayana’s work will be published in a book produced by the organization.

Alice Hewitt, a first year IB visual arts student, has had her animation “Time after Time” chosen to be a part of the selection of the 2nd edition of “Beirut Animated”. Screening of her animation will be open to the public from May 2nd-7th at the Metropolis Art Cinema, Empire-Sofil, Achrafieh.

It is exciting to see the success our talent students have met in these open art competitions. As the art program at ACS grows and develops we hope to encourage more of our students to take their art out of the confines of the school and explore the opportunities available to them in the greater art community of Lebanon.
All washed up in new theatre space

Steve Wakem, HS Drama Teacher

The High School Auditorium has traditionally been the venue for ACS theatre productions. Last year saw Black Comedy by Peter Schaffer in the fall and Birds and the Beasts by Walt Veasy in the spring. This year, the ACS theatre department has gone through some exciting changes, all of which have stimulated a mood of experimentation and new ideas. It begins where the creating takes place.

The ‘Drama Studio on the Field’ is the new home of the ACS black box theatre! It was inaugurated by the ‘All Washed Up Players’ in the production of Soap Opera by David Ives. The ‘All Washed Up Players’ are a new student theatre ensemble that decided on the script after a number of after school play readings… It is a play about a washing-machine repairman who falls in love with a picture perfect washer. Should he tell his girlfriend Mabel? Is the washer two-timing him with a dryer? If you missed the recent three episode season, keep an eye out for the ‘All Washed Up Players’ to make a return later in the year.

The new studio space is essentially a ‘black box’, uninterrupted and incredibly versatile. It means that the theatre program is not limited to presenting work in a traditional proscenium theatre, but instead showing, in the words of Bertold Brecht, that you really can do theatre anywhere. Soap Opera used a very minimalist production design – no stage lights, limited props, DIY costuming and a simple set under the control of rolling black screens. The result? Actors could engage with their audiences on a very intimate level! With all this in mind, stay tuned for upcoming actor monologues and short 10 minute plays, as well as a return of Soap Opera in the new ‘Drama Studio on the Field’!

Sports Matters

Winter/Spring Season Sports News

Timothy Doran, Director of Athletics/Activities

Beginning January, 2011, the ACS athletics program for winter/spring sports teams was up and literally running. Immediately after Christmas vacation, JV and Varsity badminton and basketball teams were selected. By early February, Middle School basketball was working hard and Track and Field began training soon afterwards.

Our badminton teams, who are six time EMAC champions, began working toward participation in the Lebanese National Championships, the METS Age Group Championship in mid-February, and the Lebanese Schools Championships in April. In the 2011 Lebanese National Championships and in age group women’s singles 14-15 years, Marielle Marktanner was once again a winner of GOLD and Toshi Imabayashi (last year’s champion) won the SILVER medal in 17-18 year old men’s singles. We sent a team of 26 to Amman for METS Age Group Badminton Championship in February and the results are posted on the ACS website. A brief summary is as follows:

- Boys and Girls Gold medal champions
  - Singles: 4
  - Doubles: 3
- Boys and Girls Silver medalists
  - Singles: 1
  - Doubles: 2
- Boys and Girls Bronze medalists
  - Singles: 4
  - Doubles: 2

Sportsmanship Trophy

ACS Beirut!!!!!!

Our girls Varsity and JV basketball teams are virtually undefeated this year after 7 games each. From March 30-April 2, they will play in an ACS Invitational Event and will finish their season in IC Alton Reynolds from April 13-16. ACS JV boy’s basketball 2011 is the most powerful team we have had in the past 10 years. Locally, they have lost only once to a Varsity team and in a recent METS Varsity tournament, they maintained a respectable 2-2 record. They, too, will finish their season April 13-16. The ACS Varsity boys traveled to Kuwait for the ISAC basketball tournament from March 16-20. Prior to departing, their record was 5-2 against strong local competition. During ISAC they dominated every team they played, demonstrating superior defense, brilliant passing, outstanding offensive tactics, and great teamwork to finish as the champions with a 7-0 record.

ACS Track and Field is preparing for the following events:

- Dual meet vs. Lycee Francaise March 30; Dual meet vs. I.C. April 6; Triangle meet- ACS/Lycees/IC April 13; METS championship- Amman, Jordan, May 9-8. This year, the coaches have the strongest contingent of high school runners in 8 years and they are looking forward to some fine performances and possibly even setting new ACS track and field records.

Middle School basketball practice sessions are witness to a mixed crowd of over 30 players on each occasion. They are driven by lead coach Martin Mugharbil and are working very hard on all the basic skills that will allow them to participate in local games throughout the month of May.
In its eighth consecutive year, the LEBMUN conference boasts over one hundred regional and local participants who are arranged into four different councils/forums. These forums are the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. The councils are chaired by nine ACS students who constitute the Secretariat and have worked tirelessly to once again bring Lebanon’s first and oldest Model United Nations conference into convention.

Throughout its duration, February 9th to 12th, the LEBMUN conference was marked by speeches from respected journalists, politicians, and diplomats, in-depth debate sessions and countless other memorable events. LEBMUN 2011 was a rewarding experience for all involved. Students learned from the conference’s heated debates over relevant and pressing global issues. Whether a chair, a delegate, or even a spectator, one is bound to leave a LEBMUN conference—having experienced, or at the very least witnessed a rush of excitement, enthusiasm, and knowledge. In the spirit of MUN, we are looking forward to students working together and sharing different points of view regardless of their school or personal background. It is LEBMUN’s aim to forge an environment conducive to critical debate, open-mindedness, and diplomatic conduct. These characteristics were enhanced by participation in the conference.

The prestigious MUN club at ACS is an extracurricular activity which shapes and adds to a student’s character. The program helps students develop their leadership skills through research and debate. In the program, students take on the roles of foreign diplomats and participate in a simulated session of a UN assembly tackling current international issues. ACS students participate in several renowned international conferences where they consistently exhibit their skills and receive awards of distinction, that verifying their exceptional abilities. Some of the international conferences in which our students have participated include the St. Andrews International MUN in Dublin, Qatar MUN at Georgetown in Doha; the UNA-USA MUN Conference in New York; and the Harvard MUN. The Secretariat also organizes the annual LEBMUN conference, a region MUN conference hosted by the ACS MUN club. Participants include students from Sagesse High School, the Raffic Hariri High School, the Ahliyyah School for Girls (Jordan), and the Jesus and Mary School. The LEBMUN conference has consistently proven to be challenging, well organized, and educational.

The MUN experience was fun in so many ways, whether it was the stimulating discussion, the diversity, the great food, the level of debate or the friends made.

When I first decided to write this before the conference began, I was expecting it to be a long boring process of narrating yet another school trip. But as I sat down to write this now, I was rather surprised at how easily the ideas came to me. I can honestly say— for all of us who went—that this trip was truly memorable. And on a personal note, it was an experience which has neither smashed nor not smashed the vial, and the cat is neither alive nor dead.

Lebmun 2011

Georgetown MUN Conference

Breen Chameddine, Grade 10

“Not only is the universe stranger than we imagine, it is stranger than we can imagine.” These infamous words were initially spoken by Sir Arthur Eddington, a 20th century, astrophysicist. However, on the 11th of February, Andy Fletcher used them in a much stranger context.

Though his two-day lecture was comprised largely of the theory behind quantum mechanics, I cannot confidently say that even Mr. Fletcher himself understood what he was preaching: He touched upon many topics that weekend—thermodynamics, chaos theory, the big bang theory and others but honestly, the complexity of them eluded my not-so-scientific mind.

I have always preferred a good fiction. There were many scientific intellectuals in the audience that weekend—those who were, no doubt, entirely captivated by the presentation on fractals and whatnot. One of the topics broached by Fletcherconfounded even the best of us. “Schrödinger’s Cat”, he said, “is the greatest paradox of all.”

I could practically feel the audience squaring their shoulders to brace against what I am sure most thought was an intricate math formula. “Particles have no real location or velocity until you look at them,” Fletcher announced.

I sympathized with the confused audience.

Fletcher explained that in the world of quantum physics—that is, our world—reality does not happen without an observation. How he went on to say this was proven by a thought experiment developed by Erwin Schrödinger in 1935.

“"There is a closed box," Fletcher explained, "and in this box, Schrödinger places an Alpha particle (which eventually decays). Assuming that he places the particle in the box, and then closes the box, the particle will decay—no, dissolved into a ‘quantum of uncertainty’ in Schrödinger’s terms. It has neither decayed nor not decayed, but both possibilities coexist simultaneously. This is known as ‘simultaneous superposition’.”

Along with the particle, Schrödinger placed a Geiger counter that, when detecting a decaying particle, will drop a hammer in the theoretical box. Underneath the hammer “seeks you” (or detects that you have made an observation) and the particle chooses to die...last week. And if the particle died last week, then the Geiger counter was activated last week, the hammer hit the vial last week and the cat died last week. The catch? The cat has not been dead for a week...until you open the box.

I was scratching my head in disbelief, too.

Fletcher stopped in, what he no doubt rehearsed, a “dramatic pause.”

This is the moment when I became more than a little skeptical. When you look into the box, apparently, the particle “sees you” (or detects that you have made an observation) and the particle chooses to die...last week. And if the particle died last week, then the Geiger counter was activated last week, the hammer hit the vial last week and the cat died last week. The catch? The cat has not been dead for a week...until you open the box.

Most of the questions after this revelation were on various ways of observing the box (“What if the cat was hooked up to a heart monitor?”). But I suspect those individuals didn’t quite accept that it was a thought experiment.

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Fletcher explained that in the world of quantum physics—that is, our world—reality does not happen without an observation. How he went on to say this was proven by a thought experiment developed by Erwin Schrödinger in 1935.
“It will take the best in each of us to make the best world for all of us.”

For the first time ever, we celebrated Earth Day at ACS this year on April 19th.

ACS Community members arrived to school in all shades of green and we kicked off our celebration at 9:00am in various shades of gray and black as we turned out the lights in a school-wide Earth Hour simulation. The main purposes of Earth Hour are to bring awareness of climate change, actively reduce energy consumption, and reflect on what we take for granted and which of our daily habits we could change to reduce wastefulness. During our mock Earth Hour, ACS’s electrical consumption decreased by 80.6%!!!

Following Earth Hour, the HS assembled in the gym for a multitude of presentations by students and guest speakers. Our celebration ended with a fun and educational environmental jeopardy game lead by IB Y2 Chemistry students. The winning team received the famous and highly desired lunch box, including delicious home-made brownies, of senior Souhail Halaby.

ACS has been working on raising awareness of environmental issues all school year long. Since January, HS students and staff have been provided with “food for thought” in quotations and youtube video links. High School students have done presentations and created activities for Elementary and Early Years students. We are reducing waste by favoring ceramic over plastic cups and trying to use fewer plastic garbage bags. For the coming year, we envision use of reusable aluminum water bottles throughout the school, which we hope will begin at the ACS Springtastick Carnival this May. The ACS Go Green group is working on acquiring permanent recycling bins and beginning a battery recycling program.

We continue to research some other environmentally friendly possibilities including: reducing water consumption in toilet tanks; use of biodegradable plastic garbage bags and use of locally produced student agendas made from recycled paper.

ACS is not the only place in Lebanon “going green”. The ANA MA BKEBB initiative is an anti-littering campaign to raise awareness and educate citizens against this bad habit. It started as a personal initiative and is now a cause on Facebook, with over 6,000 members. There are posters around the campus from them and similar car stickers were distributed to the Earth Day audience, of course with priority given to those wearing green!

My hope is after all the activities that occurred throughout the month and specifically on April 19, our community will better understand the significance of this celebration and remember that we all have to work for our Planet, our only and unique planet, each and every day with the attitude that “each day is Earth Day”. An Italian astronaut, after recently having visited space said, “in being up there, one realizes that this Planet is the only place in which we can be, and that it is very important that we take good care of it.”

Many thanks to the following people who contributed to this valuable, interesting and enriching event:

• Technical support throughout the event: Mohamed Abdallah
• Guest Speakers: Eric Viala, Dalal Jawhari
• Technical support throughout the event: Mohamed Abdallah
• Help with the green actions at ACS: Ibrahem Bedeir, Zeina Misk, Reem Chamseddine and Bilal Abdallah.
• Leading the information campaign and sharing your ideas: Jeneen Hadj-Hammou and Dany Haddad.
• Student Presenters: Reem Chamseddine, Bilal Abdallah, Maya Haji Hassan, Souhail Halaby, Mouibbash Irfan, Jameel Showail, Iva Dim, Eva Touba, Khaleed Assafi, Mark DeRoca and Rovan Gelacio.
• Event hosts: Jeneen Hadj Hammmou, Dany Haddad and Shezza Dalal.
• Organization and preparation of the Environmental Jeopardy game: Jeneen Hadj Hammmou, Maya Wehbe, Rayan El-Masri andOheeda Jalloul.
• Student presenters in the Elementary School: Suheir Saleman, Omar Zaghul, Maya Haj-Hassan, Marwa Shatila, Rayan El-Masri andOheeda Jalloul.
• Students assistants for Early Years activities: Jeneen Hadj-Hammou, Dany Haddad, Rayan Kaakati, Nour Gebara, Souhail Halaby and Thomas Hewitt.
• Ideas, feedback, encouragement and support: Suheir Saleman, Nada Afn, Sana Kouati, Fabio Convolia and Andre Bechara.
• For helping to add spirit to the day: the Student Council.
• For your recognition and thoughtful gift: Jason Crook.
• A special thank you: all teachers and students who are part of the ACS recycling teams, and to all teachers who have engaged students into discussions of environmental issues throughout this month.

“Each of us were to improve just one thing the world would be transformed.”

Remember to always ask yourself: What can I do today to “transform the world”, even if on a very small scale...
The ACS Board of Trustees held its annual reception on Friday March 4, at Beit Damon. This was an opportunity for board members to share their vision for the school with members of the school community and supporters of ACS. We extend an enthusiastic thank you to Ms. Yara Rubb and members of the Advanced Choir, who go by the acronym “SSG”, for entertaining the guests with a lineup of popular songs.

The ACS Parent Committee (PC) Aims and accomplishments

Dr. Assad Taha, ACS Parent and President of the Parents’ Committee

The American Community School Parent Committee, officiated by Ministry decree on 12 December 1981, is a voluntary parent body holding advisory capacity. The Committee consists of 13 to 17 members who represent the 4 sections of the school: Early Years, Elementary, Middle, and High School, and are elected by ACS parents every three years. We are one of few schools in Lebanon with an active parent committee who meets and coordinates with administration on a regular basis to address different aspects of the school.

The ACS Parent Committee is a valuable link between parents and the school and holds regular monthly meetings with the Headmaster, Dr. George Damon. The minutes of these meetings can be found on the ACS website, a decision that was made in an effort to be transparent and accessible to the school community at large.

Members of the PC address school wide issues of general concern to the ACS population. The proceedings of the Parent Committee, as well as all its activities, fall under and are guided by the ACS mission statement, which emphasizes the importance of fostering an environment conducive to the development of well-rounded, responsible, and effective citizens.

The stated aims of the ACS Parent Committee include:

- Develop a more extended relationship between schools administration and the parent body at large.
- Bring awareness of the school’s operations, philosophy and educational system to the parents.
- Reflect parents’ concerns and ensure their participation by listening to ideas and opinions.
- Provide feedback and comments from home on social, emotional and educational issues that students face.
- Help to enrich students’ social and educational experience at ACS by holding an annual fundraising event to help support the school and its programs.
- Help establish solid connections and avenues of communication with the community at large.

The PC has recently restructured itself into task forces on any school related issues, and be assured that these concerns will be taken seriously and resolved to the best of our ability.

Your ACS Parent Committee is:

- Assad M. Taha: President
- Maha Naaamani-Halaby: Vice President
- Iman Dandan: Treasurer
- Fidaa Chehayeb Wahab: Secretary
- Ziad Boustany: Past President
- Tina Fouad Affard: Communications Chair
- Haifa Dimechkie Makdisi: Education
- Ghelia Ladjki: Colin Andrew Smith
- Rula Tawil: Nada Al Zahem
- Nasser Bakkar: Walid Moneimne
- Dima Mansour:

Social issues play a large role in any school, and the PC worked on raising awareness of bullying and other behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment. Administration responded with school-wide reappraisal and reinstitution of its established policies, which have helped drastically decrease disruptive incidents at school. In addition, we initiated a parent education program on drug and alcohol use/abuse in schools with a presentation by the SKOUN organization. We believe parental awareness and involvement helps to alleviate the stress of social issues in the school.

We are a think tank who assists in the improvement of daily operations at ACS. The PC was recently involved in a medical task force that reviewed and monitored the execution of disaster and emergency preparedness plans for the school. We made specific recommendations for the refinement of the plan and its effective execution. An on-going project includes discussions on traffic issues and improvement of the transportation system. We are involved in the process of finding a new bus service with trained drivers and staff, GPS systems, plus improved communications and security, to be used for school activities and student needs. Over the years, we have also raised considerable sums of money for school-based projects through events such as the Mother’s Day Breakfast in 2010, Jazz Night in 2009, and the School Calendar in 2009-2010.

We hope to grow as an organization and increase our capacity to serve the ACS community. Parents should feel free to confide, directly or anonymously, in PC members on any school related issues, and be assured that these concerns will be taken seriously and resolved to the best of our ability.
Celebrating Seniors Night

On Friday March 11, members of the Class of 2011 and their families gathered in the Lower School Auditorium to take a moment to reminisce about the years they have spent at ACS and to celebrate their accomplishments before the end of year rush. The event was widely attended and made everyone feel proud to be part of this unique community.
Overview of dates, events and other important information:

Dates courtesy of Marie Assir

- IB mock exams: MARCH 28-APRIL 1
- CAS/CS hours & Non-diploma/LB senior original project deadline: APRIL 19
- Last day of classes for IB diploma students & second year IB courses only, unless needed by the teacher: APRIL 20
- Cap and Gown pick up: BEGINS MAY 3
- IB external exams: MAY 3-23
- Last day of classes for all other seniors (LB & American College Prep students): MAY 11
- LB & American College Prep final assessment period: MAY 16-20
- Sister School Unplugged: MAY 27
- Senior Survey Deadline: MAY 27
- Prom: MAY 28
- Athletic Awards Assembly: MAY 31 6:00-8:30 PM in the Gym

- Senior graduation rehearsal: JUNE 2 3:00-5:30 PM Meet in front of the BD to go to the Assembly Hall, AUB. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.
- Senior lunch & departure program: JUNE 2
- Graduation ceremony: JUNE 3 Assembly Hall, AUB 5:45 pm Students arrive 6:30 pm Doors open for parents 7:00 pm Ceremony starts 9:00 pm Graduation Buffet Dinner, St. Georges Marina Club

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Graduation Dress: reminders:

- Your cap, gown and gold tassel will be given to you at school after spring break. Make all efforts to come on time to the assigned distribution sessions.
- Gentlemen: dark pants (gray or navy); crisp white shirt; formal tie; dark socks to match pants; black shoes.
- Ladies: white or beige dress; white or beige shoes; white collar is attached to the gown (must be removed from robe, washed and ironed).

Class of 2011 Matters

Dear Seniors,

I hope your year is going well. Only three months and you will have completed your academic career at ACS.

Although the year is quickly coming to an end and you might feel that nothing is important anymore, maintain your momentum and work as hard as ever throughout these last months. Remember that your final grades are sent to universities and acceptances can be rescinded if there is a drop in grades and/or attendance. Final grades are also often used to determine financial aid. Most importantly, keep working hard in order to make sure your family, your teachers and you are proud of your achievements, and to give your high school career a successful closure to. I wish you all the success that you deserve.

On the next page, you will find an overview of important dates, events and information that you all must be aware of. Please read it carefully and thoroughly, and mark all relevant dates on your personal calendar or agenda. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Good luck on your mocks and/or finals. IB and LB students, I wish you strength and patience during your official exams period, and may you all enjoy your end-of-high school celebrations.

Dania Maaliki
IB-HS Chemistry Teacher
Science Department Head
Grade 12 Coordinator
ACS-Beirut
dmaaliki@acs.edu.lb

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Fundraising Matters

Connect 102 - Jazzin’ It Up

Another successful fundraising event - Connect 102: Jazzin’ It Up - took place on Wednesday March 9, at Gruen Eatery in the Gefinor Center. More than 120 ACS parents attended in support of the school and enjoyed jazz music played by the Tom Horning Trio. There were many raffle prizes donated by generous ACS parents who wish to remain anonymous. Prize items included an oriental carpet, cigar boxes, fancy wallets and cardholders, a BlackBerry phone, an iPod touch and Cable Vision Subscriptions. There was also a brunch invitation for four at the newly renovated Eau de Vie, donated by Phoenicia Intercontinental Hotel.

Thanks to all the parents who attended and supported this event. Your generosity raise more than $9,000 to directly support the ACS Annual Fund. Special thanks to the tireless effort the Parents’ Volunteer Committee put into making this event a successful and enjoyable one.

Annual Fund Matters

The Lucky Lira Campaign

The "Lucky Lira Campaign" is an initiative to support the ACS Annual Fund. The idea originated in the U.S.A., where collecting coins in a “piggy bank” type container generated significant financial support for a school. In fact, one school raised $10 million!

This is a fun and challenging campaign to engage the ACS Community to work toward a common goal. In addition to the student body, we hope to inspire all other community members including parents, alumni, faculty, and staff to donate to the Lucky Lira Campaign.

Tuition at ACS covers between 75-85% of our operating budget (depending on enrollment). The Annual Fund fills the gap needed to sustain the school’s commitment to every family. This fund benefits every member of our community.

It supports:

• Students, by providing additional educational resources and improved facilities.
• Families that are eligible to receive financial aid for students to attend ACS.
• Faculty & staff by providing: equipment for classrooms; improvements for the working environment; salaries and professional development.

The Lucky Lira Campaign collection box is at the BD entrance and will be in different locations around school, so look for it and help the community by donating to the Annual Fund.

We appreciate everyone’s participation and involvement in this drive.

You can make the difference with every Lira.

Thank you!
Welcome to ACS!
Najwa Zabad, Director of Admission and Financial Aid

Come with me as we take a look in the admission office. What goes on in the office? Who works behind those doors? What are their roles?

The Admissions Office caters to current and prospective families and students from all demographics and attends to daily office work. It is our goal to provide quality service to our students and the entire ACS community. The staff consists of four members—the Director, the Administrative Assistant, the Junior Administrative Assistant, and the Student Information System Specialist. We meet prospective parents and students, answer their inquiries and process their applications. The receipt of an application triggers a chain of actions and reactions that result in accepting and enrolling, wait listing, or recommending an applicant for future consideration.

We are currently working diligently on printing admission decisions for the 129 applicants who were interviewed and tested during the March Entrance Exams.

MEET THE ADMISSION OFFICE STAFF:

Mrs. Najwa Musallam Zabad
Director of Admission and Financial Aid

Mrs. Zabad is responsible for directing and overseeing policies pertaining to students’ admission, registration, financial aid and scholarships. She oversees all aspects of admission, from the initial application to the printing of the graduation diploma. In addition to being a representative of ACS to the external community, Mrs. Zabad works closely with the heads of the four school divisions and the Business Office to ensure that the admission process runs smoothly and that each class is filled with the appropriate number of qualified students. She also generates enrollment and demographic statistics which are used to suggest tuition increases and indicate preferred programs by prospective families. Mrs. Zabad’s goal is to make the office a warm and welcoming place where prospective parents and their children feel at ease.

Mrs. Joumana Zmerli
Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Zmerli is responsible for providing administrative support in the Admission Office. She assists with the admission process from receiving candidates and general queries about the school to registration of students. Mrs. Zmerli ensures efficient operation of the office and always has a smile on her face. She promotes a positive image, the school’s mission and fosters a welcoming environment. When Mrs. Zmerli is not answering the phone or keying information into Skyward, she is generating invoices for applications or for enrolment of newly accepted students. She also updates the admission web page.

Mrs. Mona Agha
Junior Administrative Assistant

This is the second year at ACS for Mrs. Agha, who enjoys working in the school environment. She, like Mrs. Zmerli, assists with the general aspects of the admission process, and executes a variety of tasks to ensure the efficient operation of the office. Mrs. Agha prepares new student files and transfers these files to the appropriate Division offices. When Mrs. Agha is not at her desk answering phone calls or managing and entering data, she is either giving school tours to prospective parents or covering the lunch break for the receptionist.

Mrs. Suha Sandakly
Student Information System Specialist

Mrs. Sandakly is a professional who coordinates and accomplishes a variety of tasks. She updates and maintains data in Skyward, the student information system software. Mrs. Sandakly validates student grades and grade changes, creates and processes reports, student records/transcripts, teachers and students’ course schedules, class rosters and other student information. She liaises between the student information system and Skyward users and promotes proficiency by providing necessary coaching. She handles various administrative and clerical tasks as needed. She works closely with Dr. Warren and the Middle and High School principals in arranging class schedules, as well with the Dean of Students in the enrolment and withdrawal of classes.

Together, we are a happy team working at ACS with a truly amazing community of dedicated and vibrant people.

Congrats Hussein Hijazi!
Ibrahim Bedeir, Director of Physical Plant

In February, Mr. Hussein Hijazi, ACS’s lead guard, attended a two-week training course entitled “Antiterrorism Assistance Program” sponsored by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, US Department of State.

Mr. Hijazi, who attended a previous training course in Amman, Jordan, was chosen to represent ACS at the Kaslik training location in Lebanon, sponsored by the US embassy in Beirut.

On both occasions, Mr. Hussein Hijazi received a certificate of acknowledgement for his ability to perform and excel both mentally and physically.

Congratulations, Hussein.
ACS is fortunate to have you.
**Staff Professional Development Day**

Kaline Majdalani
Human Resources Coordinator

Team spirit comes to mind when I look back at the last three Staff Professional Development days. On Nov. 26, 2010, and Jan. 28th, 2011, we attended a 2-day workshop on Stress management. Who knew that the techniques we acquired would help us get through the next PD day on March 24? We had plans to go to Deir el Qamar, where our Outdoor Education facility is located, to work on team building activities with Andre Bechara. Due to bad weather, our plans changed, forcing us to remain at school where Andre and his assistant Wissam quickly devised a new schedule with creative indoor activities. Despite the disarray caused by being rained in, Andre, Wissam and the supportive staff quickly acclimated to make this day special for everyone. Uniting in an unpredictable situation proved that working together toward a common goal increases morale and eases conflicts that arise. We can apply this approach to our work environment to relieve daily stress. Wrapping up the day, the cafeteria team treated us to a royal barbecue. We are grateful to them for quickly adapting to the change of venue.

Here’s what some of my colleagues said about the day…

- "When I look back to this day I feel happy!"
- "It released the playful child within us."
- "I think that day awakened the child inside me, and that was great!"
- "We were enthusiastic about team play. It was genuine and energy was high!"
- "It was a wonderful day to bond with our colleagues. "Truly, I felt alive.""
- "It’s the people, not the places that matter!"
- "We had a good time and we learned how to bond."
- "I truly enjoyed the day. It was an exceptional PD!"
- "Though I was disappointed of not going to Deir el Qamar City, it made me feel closer to my colleagues than ever before."
- "I look at this day as a tremendous experience with fabulous company!"
- "My day was very enjoyable. I believe that small changes to our daily routine make work life pleasant and fun. Outdoor activities can make a difference in people’s life. They would feel more energetic, calm and creative. It would recharge our bodies with happiness."

We are looking forward to our next Professional Development day in Deir el Qamar with more team building activities.

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**Meet the Board**

Deedee McMillen Corradini ’61

"I am who I am because of ACS and having grown up in Beirut," Deedee McMillen Corradini says. She is an alumsna of ACS Class of ’61, and has been serving on the board since 2001. It was Laila F. Alamuddin '62, who brought Mrs. Corradini back to ACS. Although Mrs. Corradini moved repeatedly between Lebanon, Syria and the U.S.A. during her childhood, she maintained a particular attachment to ACS, which is largely why she got involved in the ACS Board of Trustees.

Her face lit up as she recalled her memories of ACS. She said that much of ACS is the same -the auditorium and the Middle School building- but a lot of it has changed.

When she first started at ACS in first grade, it was in a completely different building in a different part of Beirut. She was a student for most of elementary school and returned for 8th and 9th grades as a boarder and lived in the BD building. ACS was known for its annual outdoor activities- Field Day was held at the AUB field and the Spring Carnival was held on the ACS campus. She still remembers her favorite teachers, the Turmelles, and the intensive sports- basketball, baseball and soccer.

Having studied and grown up in three countries, Mrs. Corradini believes that ACS, along with Lebanon, builds individuals and prepares them for the world.

As the Senior Vice President of Prudential Utah Real Estate, Mrs. Corradini has greatly contributed to the Development Committee of the ACS Board of Trustees. Having also been Mayor of Salt Lake City from 1992-2000, as well as being heavily involved with women’s groups, including serving as the President of Women’s Ski Jumping USA, and as the Vice President of the International Women’s Forum, Mrs. Corradini’s vision is that more women should run for office. She strongly recommends it and thinks that this will help build a more peaceful world. “Women bring a different perspective to life and issues, and have so much to offer. I believe that our world would benefit from our insight and nature as women—50% of the world population is women, and we need to be better represented in the political sphere,” she said.

**Twins Day**

“Twins Day” was the final day of the High School Student Council’s Spirit Week, held April 4-8. Most students dressed alike, as did many teachers. In honor of former math teacher Richard Johnson (father of current history and psychology teacher Betsy Crook), the uniform was powder blue shirts and khaki pants—just as Mr. Johnson wore daily over his long career at ACS.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that ACS Alumni Elizabeth West Fitzhugh ’43, Allen West ’48, and David West ’51, are the grandchildren of Robert Haldane West (1862-1906)? Professor West taught a wide variety of courses in his 23 years at AUB (then the Syrian Protestant College), and was eventually named Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. After his untimely death in 1906, his admiring colleagues and students decided to honor his legacy by naming the new student centre building “West Hall”.

ACS CARNIVAL
An ACS Family Event

springTASTIK

Date: Saturday, May 21, 2011
Time: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Tickets: LBP 5,000 (sold at the door)

Everyone is welcome. Come enjoy a day filled with fun, games, food and raffle prizes.

Thank You
Rana Salam Design
for designing the new ACS Matters.

www.mishmaoul.com