

# the diaspora potrzebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School of Beirut, Lebanon

Volume XXXIX Number 1

Our 39th year of publication

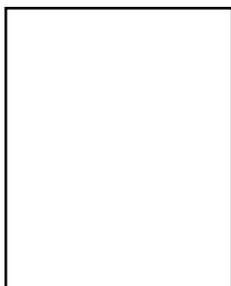
Winter 2017

## AA/ACS Board of Governors Elects Officers for the 2017-2019 Term

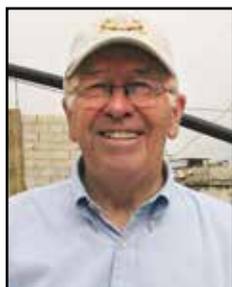
Following our first online election last summer which filled the fifteen positions on the board for the next three-year term, the new board convened a conference call on Sunday, January 22, to elect the four officer positions.



**President: Jay Bruder '74**  
[jbruder@cox.net](mailto:jbruder@cox.net)



**Vice President: Vacant**



**Treasurer: Patrick Hinds '56**  
[hindspt@yahoo.com](mailto:hindspt@yahoo.com)



**Secretary: Maria Bashshur-Abunnasr '84**  
[mariaabunnasr@gmail.com](mailto:mariaabunnasr@gmail.com)

The new slate of officers and rest of the governors will be working on the Strategic Plan and along with the Communications Committee be charting the course for the future of the alumni association. Committee assignments will be published in the next issue of the newsletter. We hope others will get involved with areas that interest them.

## In This Issue

AA/ACS Board of Governors Elects Officers for the 2017-2019 Term. . . . .	1
A Note from the Treasurer . . . . .	2
ACS Alumni Tour - New York . . . . .	3
ACS Alumni Tour - DC . . . . .	4
Alumni Notes . . . . .	5
Lost Alums . . . . .	7
In Memoriam . . . . .	8
Your Donations are Important. . . . .	9

## Follow us on ...



ACS Knights



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut

## The Diaspora Potrzebie

### Editor

Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68 (since 2013)

Phone: 425.883.6197 (Pacific Time) Evenings and weekends

Email: [lhshep@gmail.com](mailto:lhshep@gmail.com)

### Past Editors

Peter G. Gibson (Fac), Founding Editor, 1978-1986 [RIP June 6, 2009]

Constance Scott-Walker-Lindstrom '76, Editor, 1986-1990

Jonathan G. Stacey '61, Editor 1990-2012 [RIP December 7, 2012]

### Contributing Staff

Reine Youssef, Director of Development & Alumni Relations

Lina Safa, Director of Research & Development Services

Danai El Hajj Ibrahim '06, Director of Alumni & Community Relations

Nivin Rawda, Administrative Assistant, Development & Alumni Relations

Nada Fawaz, Graphic Designer

Børre Ludvigsen '64 Overseas Correspondent

### Executive Committee and Governors

President, Jay Bruder '74, [jbruder@cox.net](mailto:jbruder@cox.net)

Vice President, Vacant

Treasurer, Patrick Hinds '56, [hindspt@yahoo.com](mailto:hindspt@yahoo.com)

Secretary, Maria Bashshur-Abunnasr '84, Fac [mariaabunnasr@gmail.com](mailto:mariaabunnasr@gmail.com)

### Governors of the Association

Yasmin Agha '04

Jeffrey Hutchins '65

Andrea Aractingi '09

Gina Kano '73

Danai ElHajj Ibrahim '06

Margaret "Mug" Kelberer '73

Laila Farah '81

Kareem Kombarji '09

Amer Ghandour '06

Majd Maksad '00

Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68

Zeyd Tabbara '11

### Honorary Governors

Greg MacGilpin, Jr., Head of School at ACS at Beirut

Nina Joukowsky-Köprülü '79, Chair, ACS Board of Trustees

### Ex-Officio Governor

Reine Youssef, ACS Director of Development & Alumni Affairs

### Websites

AA/ACS: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/acs/>

ACS at Beirut: [www.acs.edu.lb](http://www.acs.edu.lb)

*The Diaspora Potrzebie* is published quarterly as a nonprofit activity of the Alumni Association of the American Community School at Beirut, Inc. 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 correspondence should be sent to AA/ACS Membership Services, 13570 NE 54th Place, Bellevue, WA 98005-1036. Our legal address is: 3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 8th Floor, New York NY 10017-2303. *The Alumni Association of the American Community School at Beirut, Inc. (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.* © 1990–2017 Alumni Association of the American Community School at Beirut, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

## A Note from the Treasurer

Dear Alumni, Faculty, and Friends of ACS,

As you may or may not realize, I probably have more frequent contact with many of you than any other member of the Board of Governors. Your donations (and, in the past, your dues payments) arrive at my home often accompanied with requests, address changes, and expressions of gratitude for the efforts put forth by the Board of Governors. And on behalf of the Board, let me express our thanks for your support and kind words. Most of your requests are easily handled. In past years, when dues were collected, the majority of requests were queries as to dues status. Of late, they have been mostly changes in contact data.

One of the treasurer's tasks is to keep detailed records of who, when, and how much has been paid to support the alumni association. We are of course, interested in who supports us, what class years are participating, and in general the makeup of our supporters. However, the records are not kept just for those purposes or out of curiosity. To maintain our status as a non-profit organization exempt from income taxes, the IRS requires we keep this information to prove upon audit that we meet the income purpose and source requirements.

Although dropping dues and switching to all donation support has simplified the book keeping, I have a request that will make life a bit easier especially during peak periods of activity such as follow the donation appeals. If at all possible, please use the form provided in the *Diaspora Potrzebie* or in the appeal letter. Fill in the blanks so that your donation can be properly allocated; identify your affiliation either as alum, faculty, or friend; and don't forget class year, faculty notation, and maiden name as appropriate.

Finally, a few alumni mistakenly make their donation checks payable to me rather than AA/ACS. Although I appreciate your confidence that I will do the right thing and deposit your check into the AA/ACS bank account and not my own, it's doubtlessly better for your income tax purposes that you make the check payable to AA/ACS. Although I am very non-profit, I don't qualify under current IRS regulations as a non-profit organization that would make your donation tax deductible.

Thank for your support of the AA/ACS.

**Patrick Hinds '56**

AA/ACS Treasurer

# ACS Alumni Tour - New York

A bustling young alumni crowd took over Taymour Grahne Gallery in Tribeca on Wednesday, November 16!

Thank you to our event host **Taymour Grahne '07** and Reunion Agents **Deena Dalal '11**, **Zeyd Tabbara '11**, and **Majd Maksad '00**.

Thank you to **Danai El Hajj Ibrahim '06** Director of Alumni & Community Relations ACS for all of the photos.



Zeina El Zein '11, Marya Moussali '11, and Tania Al Jaroudy '10



Tamara Azoury '13, Shezza Dallal '12, Malek Sadder '12, and Mazen Khawaja '13



ACS Alumni Tour in New York 2016 (Classes 1963-2015)



Roberto Maalouf '04, Majd Maksad '00, and Lena Maksad



Rhea Dandashy '15, Karim Dandashy, Sura Zaatari '07, and Nael Osseiran '06

## ACS Alumni Tour - DC

Right after New York we made our way to DC to host another group of awesome alumni! Thank you to our Reunion Agent **Ramzi Farah '05** for organizing the event.



Class of 2009 – Joud Sebai, Saad Zaatari, Lamice Halaby, and Angelica AboulHosn



Ramzi Farah '05, Rami Yashrouti '07, and ACS Head of School Greg MacGilpin



ACS Alumni Tour in DC (Classes 1958 – 2014)



Georgia Clark-Sadler '58, Bill Hermann '66 and his wife, ACS Head of School Greg MacGilpin, Jay Bruder '74, and Dudley Sadler



Drew Curtiss '75, Ava Lill-Dahlstrom '74, and Jay Bruder '74

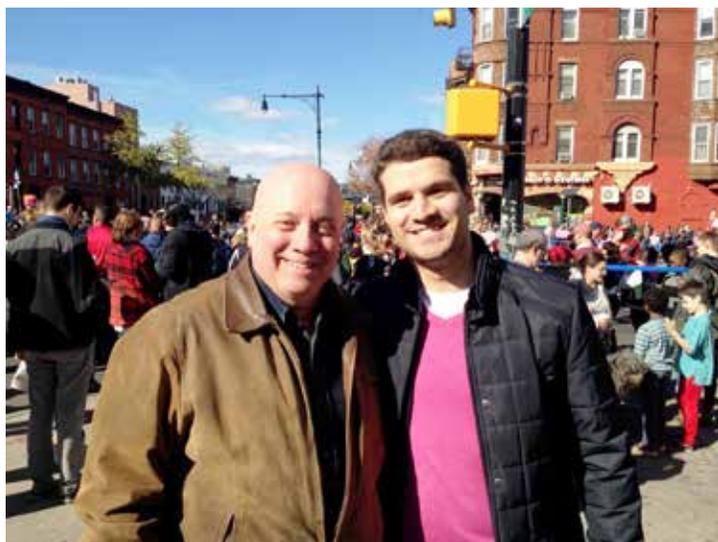
# Alumni Notes

**Barry Eldridge '61** writes to say: my wife Donna and I went to Northern California at the end of September 2016 to celebrate our son Brett's 49th birthday, visit my brother in Santa Rosa, and also to visit my ACS classmate **Anne Shoemaker**. Anne lives in a rustic area of Freestone, CA with lots of acreage, a cute house, and a barn, as well as a vineyard. She even has a neighbor who uses her grassland pasture to graze her Belted Belgian cattle, in exchange for beef...quite the deal.

While we were able to attend the Boston Reunion, Anna was unable to do so, so Donna and I "brought" the reunion to Anne. She was kind enough to cook us up a delicious asparagus cheese strata for breakfast, along with a pitcher of stupendous Bloody Marys.



Anne Shoemaker '61 (on the left), and Donna Eldridge at the breakfast table. Photo courtesy of Barry Eldridge



Jeff Hutchins '65 shared a photo with fellow AA/ACS governor Kareem Kombarji '09 at the New York City Marathon in Brooklyn on November 6.

**Margaret (Mug) Kelberer '73, BOG** After the kids were finally old enough to leave them, (I always said I will only be an empty nester if I left my own house!) I decided to head back overseas, this time as a teacher. My first post was Antananarivo, Madagascar, teaching at the American School of Antananarivo. We (my husband) and I stayed three years. I felt great to be back in an international school as a teacher. It took me back to my years at ACS, watching quick friendships form among the students because they knew friendships were fleeting with families constantly moving. I knew my experience as a Third Culture Kid was an asset in relating to international students. Our experience in Madagascar was spellbinding, the island is fascinating and the people are exceptional in the light of severe poverty and poor infrastructure. We left Madagascar to return to St Paul, Minnesota to take a "gap" year to tend to family. We are currently posted in Port of Spain, Trinidad, teaching at the International School of Port of Spain, looking forward to exploring the Caribbean!



Photo courtesy of Mug Kelberer in Madagascar with a white ruffed lemur!



**Jay Bruder '74** is wrapping up his radio show on postwar American music on February 5, 2017 after a run of 224 shows. You can catch the last broadcasts at [www.bluegrasscountry.org](http://www.bluegrasscountry.org) Sundays 7-9 p.m., US Eastern Time.

## Alumni Notes continued

**Elizabeth “Betsy” van den Berg ’74** was thrilled to reconnect with folks at the Boston Reunion! She’s dialect coaching a production of *Peter and the Starcatcher* opening in February at Constellation Theatre in Washington DC, so if you’re in the area, send her a Facebook message!



After living and working in northern Minnesota for nearly 20 years, **Dr. Barbara Kelberer-McDonald ’75** and her husband David, have moved to Osseo, Minnesota, a northwestern suburb of Minneapolis. Barbara is now serving as president of North Hennepin Community

College [www.nhcc.edu](http://www.nhcc.edu) located in Brooklyn Park, MN. The college serves over 10,000 students and is part of the Minnesota State College and Universities system. She loves the college because of the diversity of its students and employees, and its wonderful mission of access, opportunity, and student success. She is also very happy to be closer to her four adult children, and of course, the Kelberer sisters as well. **Elizabeth ’78** and **Mary ’71** and Annie (born the year the Kelberer parents moved to Saudi Arabia) are all living in the Twin Cities. Barbara’s new address is 20 6th Street NW, Apt 334, Osseo, MN 55369 or [bkkelb57@gmail.com](mailto:bkkelb57@gmail.com).

### Board of Governors Thanks Donna Harms-Hansen ’74

Those of us fortunate enough to attend the Triennial Reunion last August can vouch for how terrific and memorable it was. Kudos go to **Donna Harms-Hansen ’74** and her committee. But such an effort requires someone to step up and take charge. Donna was that person. She displayed remarkable skill in managing the process of planning and executing the myriad tasks that make the occasion truly great and satisfying to the alumni and their guests. Donna, you succeeded splendidly. On top of that, through strict adherence to tough budgets and cost cutting initiatives, the reunion actually ended with a substantial surplus of \$8500. The AA/ACS Board of Governors extends its congratulations and gratitude for a job done exceedingly well, Donna. Thank you for your personal commitment and sacrifice in making the reunion one of the best.

AA/ACS Board of Governors

**Helen Zughaib ’77**, a full-time artist, was recently invited by the US State Department, as a cultural envoy to Saudi Arabia. She met with local women artists, lectured, and exhibited her work at the US Consulates in Jeddah, Dhahran, and in Riyadh, at the Quincy House Gallery in the US Ambassador’s residence in an exhibition titled “Flourish.” Helen just finished a solo show exhibiting work she created over six years, entitled “Arab Spring/Unfinished Journeys” at York College, Pennsylvania. The show focused on the humanitarian dimension of the Arab Spring and its aftermath. Helen will be showing at the Joan Hisaoka Center for the Healing Arts in Washington, DC, in January 2017 and in March, will be exhibiting her work at the Eisemann Center of Performing and Visual Arts in Richardson, Texas. In May she will participate in the “I Am” exhibit of 30 women artists from the Middle East, at the National Gallery of Art in Amman, Jordan.



Photo courtesy of Helen Zughaib. “Imagined Peace”



Photo courtesy of Helen Zughaib. “Prayers for Peace”

## Alumni Notes continued

The stars aligned the week of October 17 and several of us 1980s alumni got a chance to reconnect after so many years. On October 17, **Nancy Bakht '85** and **Melissa "Missy" Reynolds '85** and I (**Maria Bashshur-Abunnasr '84**) had lunch together and then took a trip down memory lane with a visit to ACS and a tour given to us by ACS Head **Greg MacGilpin**. On the way, we met **John Nohos '88** who is a grade 6 Middle School teacher and **Anna Salameh-Boustani '84** who runs Bright Beginnings, the ACS daycare center. Later that week, on Sunday October 23, **Megan Khairallah '86** invited **Heidi Hilgendorf '85** and me up to her lovely mountain home near Ehden in the north for a sumptuous lunch and lovely views.



**Nancy Bakht '85, Missy Reynolds '85, and Maria Bashshur-Abunnasr '84** taken in front of the ACS BD building on October 17, 2016. Photo courtesy of Maria Bashshur-Abunnasr



**Megan Khairallah '86, Megan's son Lucas, Heidi Hilgendorf '85, my husband Yaser Abunnasr, and Maria Bashshur-Abunnasr '84** at Megan's mountain home in Ehden, Lebanon. Photo courtesy of Maria Bashshur-Abunnasr.

**Angelica Aboulhosn '09** is a public affairs specialist at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage where she performs a range of media, public relations, and marketing functions to broaden awareness, enhance programming, and gain public support for the organization's mission and programs. Prior to joining the Smithsonian, she worked as a digital strategist at the Brookings Institution and Edelman DC. She holds an M.A. in communications from Johns Hopkins University and volunteers as a docent at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery.



**Angelica Aboulhosn**

**Claire Cowen Fac** reports from Bethesda that she has four books published by Loft Press [www.loftpress.com](http://www.loftpress.com) *Job's Wednesday and Other Stories* (originally published in Beirut; now expanded), *The Light That Makes Rainbows and Other Stories*, *The Expatriates I and Other Stories*, *The Expatriates II and Other Stories*. In addition, her *The Beirutis and Other Stories* is available from [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com). Former students may be interested to know in addition to being an English teacher at ACS, she taught Communication Arts elsewhere in Lebanon, has been an actress, a clerk in a five and dime store, a hostess at a restaurant, sold Toyotas, and raised two successful daughters.



### Lost Alums

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Caroline Carleton-Burgoon '53 | Rupen Das '73               |
| Donna Lebsock-Hansen '53      | Cal Prewit '74              |
| Joan Squires-Lind '58         | Janet MacKenzie-Service '79 |
| Carole Vernier '58            | Kathy Tanner '80            |
| Kenneth Ferguson '64          | Amanda Abizaid '85          |
| Zuheir Faqih '64              | Joanne Tarazi '95           |
| Phil Kearns '66               | Ghia Zaatari '03            |
| Jennifer Smith-Mostrong '67   | Nour Kteily '04             |
| Anne Ramsaur '67              | Karina Ghoul '06            |
| David Goodwin '70             | Mayssa Midani '06           |
| Paul Meyerholtz '70           | Makram Dalal '07            |
| Charles Connell '71           | Garo Moughalian '11         |
| John Goldrick '71             | Simon Nasr '13              |
| Michael Elder '71             | Isabella Morales '14        |
| Mark Lathrop '72              | Jad Nawfal '14              |

Newsletters mailed to the alumni and faculty members listed above have been returned as undeliverable. Please send address updates to the Editor: [lhshep@gmail.com](mailto:lhshep@gmail.com)

# In Memoriam



**Howard Bliss Leavitt '39** of Amherst, died peacefully Oct. 13, at the age of 95, after a wonderful life of two marriages, children, travel, and an international career spanning almost half a century.

Born in New York City, Howard spent his early years in Beirut, Lebanon as the son of the president of International College, associated with the American University of Beirut (AUB) which had been founded by his great-grandfather in 1866. Howard

came back to the U.S. for a year at Vermont Academy and then on to Dartmouth College, from which he graduated early after the outbreak of World War II.

Howard married his college sweetheart Margaret Mentzer and was soon sent, as a communications officer, to the Pacific island of Saipan where he witnessed the flyover of B-29s on their way to Japan. After the War, Howard earned masters and doctorate degrees in education from Columbia University, and began teaching at Northern Illinois State Teachers College (now Northern Illinois University). Later, Howard and Margaret, along with three sons spent two years in Beirut where he taught at AUB, adding a fourth son for good measure.

Returning to the U.S. in the late 50s, the family moved to the Boston area where Howard taught at Boston University. In 1962 he joined the U.S. State Department in the Agency for International Development (USAID). He became the coordinator of international programs at Pennsylvania State University, followed by his return to Washington to work for the World Bank. He completed his career as a visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Throughout his life, Howard loved independence, intellectual accomplishment, and adventure. Along with wife Margaret and his sons he was an avid mountain climber, camper, cave explorer, and power boater. He wrote and published dozens of academic works and wrote and/or edited several books, including, *First Encounters, Native Voices on the Coming of the Europeans*, in 2010. In his later years Howard became interested in creating art and over a 20-year span produced wonderful oil paintings.

After the death of Margaret, in 1997 in Amherst, Howard met and married Joan Ibish, herself an accomplished academician. Together they toured the world from China to the Mediterranean, spending summers at the Leavitt compound on Pine Island in Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire.

He is survived by wife Joan; three sons Hunt, John, and Don, six grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters.

**John P. Spagnolo '52** died at the age of 81 on March 21 after a very long and valiant struggle with cancer. A devoted husband to Penelope, loving father to Rebecca and Tabitha, and enchanted grandfather to Jacqueline, he will be remembered for his abiding loyalty to his family and his insatiable thirst for knowledge and enlightenment. These were surpassed only by a great sense of fun. Born on August 1, 1934 in British-mandated Palestine, he spent much of his youth in Lebanon where he met his wife of over fifty years. At the American University of Beirut, he discovered his enduring love for history before leaving for Oxford where he spent some of the happiest days of his life studying Franco-Ottoman history. With DPhil in hand, he and Penelope took a circuitous route (via their beloved Beirut) before settling on the Vancouver Lower Mainland in 1966 where he began his 33-year career in the history department of Simon Fraser University. Life-long friends who, along with his family, will remember him as an accomplished scholar, but will miss him always for his youthful sense of humour, occasional byzantine ways, gentlemanly manner and, above all, his resplendent smile to the end.

Excerpted from *Vancouver Sun*.

I recommend a very interesting obituary published by Simon Fraser University with emphasis on his personal Middle East connections: <https://www.sfu.ca/ccsmc/news/obituary--dr--john-spagnolo-.html>



**Jeanne Locher-Zoller '59**

Jeanne, age 75, of Bozeman, Montana, passed away on Sept. 18, 2016. Jeanne was born May 13, 1941, in Maracaibo, Venezuela, to Walter and Gretchen (Hoffman) Locher and was raised in Beirut and educated at the American Community School. She later received a Bachelor's in Sociology from the University of Cincinnati. She met Al Zoller and the two were married in 2003.

Jeanne worked for Longview Mental Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, as well as social work in Southeast Ohio. She was known for giving freely of her time to women in need, lifting their spirits in times of crisis. She had lived in Maracaibo, Atlanta, Beirut, and Cincinnati. When Jeanne was not devoting her time to her family and the people surrounding her, she could be found riding her horses or playing with her dogs.

Jeanne is preceded in death by her parents and sister **Ann '60**. She is survived by her husband Al Zoller of Bozeman; brother **John Locher '71** of Amherst, NH; brother **Ralph Locher '57** of Fremont, CA; a daughter; and a son.

Excerpted from *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*

Originally reported by **Kathy Pope-Olsen '60**

## In Memoriam continued

**Mervin Pfau '61** passed away at home under hospice care November 23, 2016 at age 73 after fighting cancer for the last two years.

Merv was born in Washington DC and had lived in Arlington, VA, Beirut, Lebanon, Frankfurt, Germany, Rome, Italy, and Cinnaminson, NJ, before settling in Mount Laurel, NJ in 1985. He served seven years in the Navy earning his Dolphins and serving aboard *USS Cavalla* (SS-244), *USS Snook* (SSN-592), and was a Plank owner with the *USS Lapon* (SSN-661). After his enlistment, he worked his entire career with Verizon.

Merv was a proud generous man, hosting many parties and organizing cruises for family and friends.

Reported by brother **Art Pfau '63**. Other siblings who attended ACS include **Glenn '61** and **Janet Pfau-Fickeissen '66**

**Sandra Coulter '68** It is with great sadness and grief that I must announce to all of Sandy's friends of her death. Sandy died peacefully and comfortably without pain in her home on November 10. Her sister Deborah was with her along with Josie cat, our cousin David, her lifelong friend Ann, and long-time friend and neighbour Shirley. We have lost a truly remarkable woman, daughter, sister, aunt, and friend to us all. Sandy was always there when we needed her with sound advice and support given without malice nor expectation. She had been living with and fighting breast cancer since 1995, 21 years,

and earlier this summer it returned with a vengeance and she was not able to fend it off any longer... it has been a valiant fight. She asked me to tell you all, "Have a happy rest of your lives." Posted on Facebook on November 14 by **Deborah Coulter-Allan '70**

**Leon Mackiewicz FAC** was born April 11, 1940 in Waterbury, CT. He was an outstanding athlete, a local "star" as a Terryville High School All State basketball player. At Springfield College he was a member of the gymnastics travelling exhibition team. In his senior year he met his first wife **Carolyn "Kelly" (Mackiewicz) Konecny FAC** with whom he had two children, Mya and Alex. Leon and Carolyn taught in Greenwich for two years and then embarked on a new adventure, teaching at ACS in Beirut. There he organized and directed the first ever Middle Eastern International Wrestling Tournament, attended by six countries. He was also surfing advisor, ski club advisor, coach of soccer, gymnastics, and wrestling teams. During their four years in Beirut, they travelled extensively and toured three countries with the gymnastics team. In 1970 they moved to London where Leon was administrator of the American School and after two years they returned to the U.S. where they raised their children in Trumbull.

Leon was a man of many talents, highly skilled in athletics and all areas of craftsmanship – carpentry, photography, and stone masonry.

Reported by **Kelly "Mack" Barney FAC**

## Your Donations are Important

A primary purpose of the alumni association, required to maintain our non-profit status, is a commitment to support ACS financially. Paramount in that regard are the alumni donations to benefit ACS scholarship endowments exemplified by the Malcolm Kerr Endowment Fund and the Catherine Carlin Bashshur Scholarship. The investment income realized by these funds provides financial assistance to worthy students recommended and selected by the ACS administration. To that end, ACS alumni raised \$215,000 in the period from 2003 -2016 via donations to these scholarships funneled to ACS. This year you contributed \$11,000 to the Malcolm Kerr Fund. Congratulations and thank you for your continuing support of this important facet of the alumni association's role in supporting ACS.

You may donate by mailing a check payable to AA/ACS to treasurer Pat Hinds, 304 Calle Moreno, San Dimas, CA 91773-3991. Or by going to the ACS website: [acs.edu.lb](http://acs.edu.lb), click on GIVING, then Alumni Giving to support the AA/ACS General Fund or Endowed Giving to support either the Malcolm Kerr Endowment or Catherine Bashshur Scholarship.