

# the diaspora potrzebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

Volume XXXX Number 4

Our 40th year of publication

December 2018

## Thanks to You Kerr Scholarship Donations Reach a Record \$71,341

**Give Now and Help Us Reach \$100,000**

By Patrick Hinds '56

This is the time of year that your ACS alumni association (AA/ACS) appeals for your support of the association and its endeavors. Your donations to the AA/ACS General Fund cover all of our operating expenses, mainly the publication and mailing costs of *The Diaspora Potrzebie*.

### Malcolm Kerr Endowment

This year, the donation appeal focused on the Malcolm Kerr Endowment which provides financial support to deserving ACS upper school students who otherwise could not afford to attend ACS. **Thank you for your responses to date; we have raised a record \$71,341 as of October 31. Our goal of \$100,000 in the first year of this initiative is achievable. It's not too late to add your tax-deductible contribution before year's end.**

A number of alumni have given generously. It is heartening to note that nearly 70% of the donors have earmarked all or a portion of their donation to the Malcolm Kerr Endowment. The following is the story of one of our alumni.

### Why I Gave – A Letter from John Illick '71

This past September, in the early days of our annual fundraising appeal, I received a sizeable donation – a check for \$20,000 to the Malcolm Kerr Endowment. The donor was **John Illick '71**. A thank you note to John elicited a letter in response where he most eloquently shared his personal history and his motivation to donate to the Malcolm Kerr Endowment. John's story no doubt mirrors the experience of many ACS alumni and what that experience has meant to their personal development and outlook on the world. For many, the experience has motivated them to actively engage with ACS by actions and funds to support the school and help pave the financial path for worthy students.

Thank you John. We hope your words and actions will inspire other alumni to support this effort.

With John's permission, his letter is reproduced on page 3

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## The Diaspora Potrzebie

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Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68

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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 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.* © 1990–2018 Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut. All Rights Reserved.

## Board of Governors Update

**Yasmin Agha '04**, a member of the board since the last election, has agreed to serve as vice president for the remainder of this board's term.

In addition **Anna Boustany '84** and **Joseph Farhat '03** have joined the board as governors, bringing the total to fifteen members.

**Anna Boustany** graduated from ACS in 1984. After receiving a BS from Georgetown University, she returned to Beirut and taught Middle/High School History at ACS from 1990-1993. In 2004, she became the Director of the ACS Daycare, Bright Beginnings, where she still works today. Her three children are all lifers at ACS. Two of them are attending university in the United States, Brown University and Pepperdine University, while her youngest is a member of the class of 2021.

## Lost Alums

Alice Alter-Watkins '45	Daniel Richards '75
Ron Cowan '54	Elisabeth Tuythof '76
Eugene "Steve" Pierce '58	Kathy Richards-Gleason '82
Allison Turner '58	James Luma '83
Peter Riedel '59	Christian Van Nieuwerburgh '89, Fac
Kathryn Dereki-Rebeiz '61	Carol Haidar '06
Courtney Draper '67	Raya Musallam '09
Nancy Salem '71	Alexandre Khalil Fac
Bruce Buckingham '74	
Ken Sparks '74	

## Found Alum

Suzanne Freeman '68

## Follow us on ...



ACS Knights



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut

## Malcolm Kerr Endowment Continued

Dear Pat,

I would like to share a little personal history with you and with ACS. My father was a professor at AUB from 1958 to 1960 while on sabbatical from Middlebury College. I was a 1<sup>st</sup> grader at ACS at the time. From 1969 to 1971 my father was a professor at the College of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia while once again being on sabbatical from Middlebury College. At this point I was a junior in high school at ACS and was intending to graduate the following year. With the death of a family friend in 1971, I returned to Middlebury, Vermont to help care for her surviving 85 year old husband and hence graduated in the States rather than ACS. In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s my father brought many of his classes to Beirut for cultural and academic

(geography) exchanges. During his two stints and many visits to Beirut and AUB he and my mother became very close with **Malcolm Kerr '49** and his family.

ACS and my time in Beirut have been instrumental in shaping my thinking and my perspective of the world and my, and our, place and responsibilities in it. To be able to contribute to the Malcolm Kerr Endowment fund is an honor and certainly a tribute to my parents as well. The thought of contributing to a young boy or girl's education at ACS is something that I am grateful to be able to do.

Best Regards,

John Illick '71



### 2018 AA/ACS Donations Form

Malcolm Kerr Endowment (tax-deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Alumni Association General Fund (tax-deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

These donations are used for alumni association operating expenses.

Matching gift from my employer: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to "AA/ACS"** **TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Or pay by credit card online at: [acs.edu.lb](https://acs.edu.lb); click GIVING; then click Make a Gift**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden/Middle Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty/Staff/Trustee \_\_\_\_\_ (Please note years.)

Mail checks to: Pat Hinds '56, Treasurer AA/ACS at 304 Calle Moreno, San Dimas, CA 91773.

**For donations of stock:** DTC transfer: TD Ameritrade clearing # 0188

TD Ameritrade, INC, 1005 N. Ameritrade Place, Bellevue NE 68005, 800-669-3900

For credit to American Community School Account Number: 863-385-632

We ask donors to inform Lina Safa ([lsafa@acs.edu.lb](mailto:lsafa@acs.edu.lb)) and AA/ACS Treasurer Patrick Hinds ([hindspt@yahoo.com](mailto:hindspt@yahoo.com)) when the transfer of securities is initiated.

# Alumni Notes

**Allen West '48** emailed: I want to order the copies each of "Anything but Ordinary" and "Fill the bathtub!" How can I do that? Are they still available? Editor's Note: These books are available from lulu.com and Amazon.

There isn't much news of my generation. I did have lunch with Dave and **Molly Crawford-Potter '48** in August. They have moved from their home in Cambridge to a retirement home, also in Cambridge. She is the same effervescent person she has always been, although slowed down (like myself and everyone our age whom I know). I am still enjoying the *Pot*, and am delighted that we can get along without dues. I hope that change alone will contribute a lot to the **Malcolm Kerr '49** Endowment initiative. He was a good friend of mine, and remains a fine symbol for the school.

**Richard Thomas '66** visited ACS with his son on Friday, November 9, 2018. He sent this email the next day to **Nivin Rawda Fac**: Please thank Hussein for a wonderful tour yesterday. He's also running the half marathon tomorrow. And a lot faster than we will!

After ACS I went to Fordham University in New York, flew in Vietnam, and stayed in the Air Force for twenty years. I attended Nursing School (my wife is a nurse) but went back to flying afterward. The pay was so different and I had three kids wanting to go to college! (I always feel like I have to apologize for not staying in nursing). I retired in 2011 as captain on the Airbus 320.

I married a cute Irish American girl who's kept me out of jail or rehab and very happy for 48 years. Our kids are fantastic. By far the best thing we've

done with our lives.

I'm happy ACS has become what it is. My visit to Lebanon has been wonderful, but I have a lot of anxiety about its future. One bright spot is that - of all the things Beirut is - it's absolutely full of schools and students. I take heart from that.



Richard Thomas '66 and son  
Photo courtesy of Nivin Rawda Fac

**Nick Bromell '68** reconnected with ACS classmates at the class of '68 50<sup>th</sup> reunion in Seattle where he did a reading for the group. He emailed: It was indeed a pleasure to see you. I found the whole experience of our reunion very moving and am still processing it. And thank you so much for your interest in "Family Secrets." You can imagine, I am sure, how thrilling it was for me to read it to my old classmates. The essay was reprinted later in a collection of essays about childhood.

"Scooter and Me," which ACS readers might find interesting can also be accessed directly here: <https://theamericanscholar.org/scooter-and-me/#.W74BPS3Mxo4>

## Family Secrets (excerpt)

By Nicholas Bromell

Originally published in *Harpers*, is available here: <https://umass.academia.edu/NickBromell/Papers>

In The Teachings of Don Juan, Carlos Castaneda learns from his Yaqui shaman that each person has his "spot" in the world, a place where the strength of the earth wells up and protects him from the demons of the psyche. But because of the work my father used to do, I come from nowhere and have no spot. Often I feel I've built my life atop an emptiness that could implode at any moment. It is, moreover, an emptiness held firm by silence, by the untellable oddity of my childhood. My wife, who rolls her eyes when my most mundane childhood stories play out in places such as Baghdad, Piraeus, Petra, or Shiraz doesn't believe that I am awed by her childhood in a small Catholic parish on the south side of Chicago. She can't understand that I envy her because she is a real American—because she experienced a childhood other Americans recognize. We all try to make sense of our lives by having stories to tell, and, like all narratives, these stories are subject to conventions. The chief of these, in this country at least, is a prohibition against the exotic. A Southern boyhood, or a prep-school boyhood, or an only-child boyhood might be interesting, but to be told, they must be grounded in the ordinary. If the prep school is in Bogota, or if the father is a Rockefeller, the story becomes unreal and untellable. And if the father is a spy—or, as he prefers to call himself, an intelligence officer—the story becomes untellable twice over.

## Alumni Notes Continued

**Carl Einarsson '69** wrote: hoping to find someone that was in my third grade class at ACS in the 1959-1960 school year when Dad taught physics at AUB for one year. Contact Carl at fbuck3@sbcglobal.net.

**Dan Swenson '69** emailed: I was going through boxes of my parents' things and found **David Hills' '67** yearbook. Due to the start of the Six Day War, school at ACS ended early before the '67 year books were distributed. Somehow David's year book ended up with my parents. I would like to send it to him.

**Polly Freeman-Lyman '72** Thank you so much for this latest issue. I was just a little kindergartner at ACS and our family was only in Beirut one year, school year 1959-60. But there were five children in our family, and we made some lifelong friends!

In any case, I think that perhaps the "unknown" boy swimming with the others in the April 1960 photo in the September issue might be my late brother **John Freeman '65**.

**Bayard Dodge '73** visited ACS on Friday, November 2, 2018.

For the second time in as many years, I visited Lebanon, after a hiatus of 35 years. My visit was a combination of meetings, excursions, and visits with friends old and new. I spent a day in the Beka'a with an NGO promoting economic sustainability for Syrian refugees and poor Lebanese. I found the gravesite of Daniel Bliss, founder of AUB. I met an urban planner who has promoted a heritage trail in rebuilt downtown Beirut. And of course, I visited ACS.

ACS is in some ways a reflection of the substantial changes - and the

sameness - in Lebanon since I left in 1977. From the outdoor 'chillax' space for High Schoolers atop the old 'BD,' the array of the campus below embraced the familiar contours of the gym, the courtyard with its central tree surrounded by benches (but without **Mr. Gibson's** motorcycle!) and the happy din of Elementary students. But behind this facade is an entirely new school, replete with 3D printers, a Computer Lab, and other assorted elements common to modern, top-flight international schools. The student body has been completely transformed, but their interest in learning and their youthful enthusiasm are evident and familiar. Much has changed since my generation attended ACS, but much remains the same.

ACS is in good hands, and I will continue to visit. My thanks to the school staff who embraced a visit by this ACS old-timer.



**Bayard Dodge '73**  
Photo courtesy of Nivin Rawda Fac

**Hani Bashour '03** visited ACS on September 10, 2018. **Nivin Rawda Fac** contributed a note and photo from him: It was great to meet you the other day, and thank you again for the tour of ACS. Please add me to

the alumni email list when you get a chance. Thank you and I look forward to receiving ACS emails in the future!



**Hani Bashour '03**  
Photo courtesy of Nivin Rawda Fac

**Ramzi Kaiss '13** visited ACS on October 25, 2018.

**Zelinda Makepeace-Douhan Fac** writes: My father took this photo of our arrival at Boston Logan from evacuation from Beirut in 1967. Note the evacuation "garb". Those were the days when we dressed for travel. Please send on to Art if you have his email.



**Zelinda Makepeace Fac, Eleanor Pontes Fac, and Art Hebert Fac**

**Art Hebert Fac** replied: Thank you so much for reconnecting me with **Linda Makepeace-Douhan** whom I have not seen nor contacted since June 3, 1967. I have no recollection of that photo. Could you send me a copy please?

# In Memoriam

**George Henry Miller, Jr., MD '42** a resident of Livermore, passed away at age 90 on July 28, 2015. George attended public schools in Iowa before studying at the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon. He graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy in 1942 before proceeding to Princeton University. George earned his doctor of medicine degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1948 followed by his medical internship and residency in Urology at the University of Chicago.

George served his country as a member of the U.S. Navy serving briefly in WWII and re-enlisting in 1951. Aboard the *U.S.S. Consolation* hospital ship he was dispatched to Korea and Japan for active duty and entered the Naval Reserve in 1954. George taught at the University of Chicago and the College of Medicine at the University of Florida and was promoted to assistant dean and full professor in 1968. George later served as Chief of Staff at the VA Hospital in Gainesville, Florida and then accepted the position of Chief of Staff at the VA Hospital in Togus, Maine, where he remained until his retirement.

Although his sheep and horse farm kept him busy, George also enjoyed photography, golf, reading, camping, cooking, and lathe woodworking.

George is survived by his sons Baynard, George, and Duncan and daughter Sarah Ward; six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his parents, his sister, Martha Miller Vance and his wife of 67 years, Sarah.

**Eli Robinsky '42** passed away August 1, 2018. Reported by his widow Marisha Robinsky.



**Harry Hubert Hall '50** died peacefully with his family at his side on October 4, 2018 in San Jose. Harry was born January 17, 1933 in San Francisco, CA to Hubert Harry and Mary Isabella (Nicolls) Hall. He met his loving wife, Diane Roberta (Simpson) Hall when both served on the camp staff at a Boy Scout camp. He grew up in Burlingame, attending Herbert Hoover Elementary School and Burlingame High School. He graduated from the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon (the family

lived in Beirut for three years while his father was chief engineer for the Tapline Oil project). Upon returning from Beirut, he enrolled at Stanford University, earning his BA in International Relations in 1957. He later earned his teaching credential and a masters in secondary education and began a 30-year role as an educator with the Campbell Union High School District in CA. He started as a teacher and later he moved to district office positions as a supervisor and director. Harry served 30 years with the U.S. Army on both active duty and as a reservist until 1980.

Harry maintained memberships in a great many fraternal, social, professional, and service associations including the Middle East Institute and dedicated many years of service to his community as a member of the Boy Scouts of America (75 years - Eagle Scout) and Girl Scouts of the USA (60 years), Lions International (50+ years), and the American Red Cross (60+ years).

He spent his retirement years responding to dozens of natural (and man-made) disasters around the country including: 9-11, Hurricane Katrina, Loma Prieta Earthquake, Lexington Wildfire, and two trips to Guam for typhoons. He believed very strongly in community service.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Diane; his children Roberta (Mark) Pitsenbarger and Howard (Corrine) Hall; his five grandchildren; and two great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his parents and his brother, **Stuart '57**. Full obituary: [www.lastingmemories.com/memorial/harry-hubert-hall](http://www.lastingmemories.com/memorial/harry-hubert-hall)

Reported by his daughter Roberta (Hall) Pitsenbarger.

**Pete O'Connell '62** died on October 10, 2018. Survived by his brother **John '63**

Reported by **George Herrmann '63**: John and Pete were the sons of the Air Force attaché at the Embassy in Beirut, and they lived up above the city. Through an arrangement with the school, Pete drove a little Ford Falcon from home to ACS each school day, parking the car behind Kamil's shop next to the school.

I lost track of Pete when he went off to college, but got back in touch with him when the internet arrived; we have been corresponding for the last 30 years. He lived in The Villages in Florida, a community whose residents own golf carts that are gussied up with Rolls-Royce and Ferrari grilles. Pete and his wife Bonnie were avid tennis players and travelers.

## In Memoriam Continued

**John Freeman '65** died in 1981. Reported by his sister **Polly Freeman-Lyman '72**.

**Francis Bilbool '68** After finishing his schooling at ACS, Francis left Beirut and went to Israel. He had been accepted to Brandeis University and was going to go to go to the States to complete his education after touring Israel as we had cousins there. He fell in love with the country and applied to Jerusalem University and was accepted. There he completed a BA in economics. After finishing his degree, he went to Glasgow, Scotland and did a MA in economics.

He then went back to Israel and by that time we had all moved there. Francis worked in the family business at the time as my mother established a cosmetic business making creams and shampoos based on the papaya fruit.

Francis married and had two children, a boy and a girl. In the summer of 1992 he and his wife went to Holland on vacation and the night prior to their flight back to Israel his wife realized that he had died in his sleep. It was a very traumatic event for her and all of us. His children at the time were three and four years of age. Francis was a very loving and wonderful father and husband and dearly devoted to his family.

We still miss him greatly. From Norma Bilbool, Francis' sister.

*The Jerusalem Post* published a fascinating story about Francis' mother: "The Rose of Jericho". Also known as the papaya lady, Rose Bilbool died at the age of 102. By Abraham Rabinovich dated April 5, 2012.

**Karl P. Hubeny '71** age 60 passed away unexpectedly March 18, 2014, at his home. He was born Nov. 16, 1953 in Hollis, NY to Karl and Shirley Hubeny.

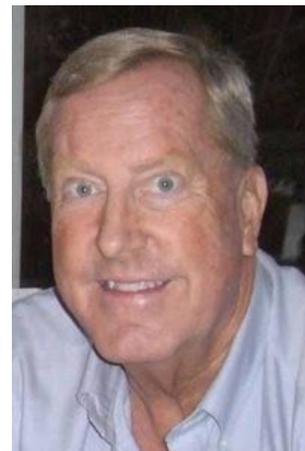
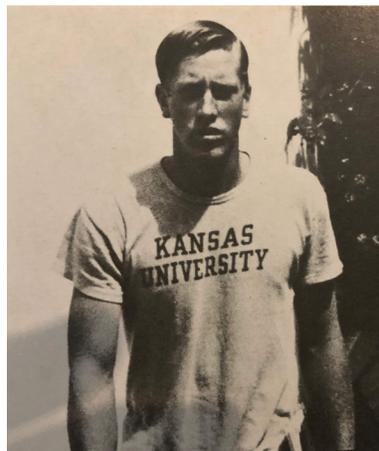
In his younger years, he moved with his family to wherever his father's engineering job took them. They even lived in Beirut, Lebanon, where he graduated from an American Community High School. Hubeny attended West Virginia University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in social work, graduating *magna cum laude*. He also got his master's degree in social work at West Virginia University, before attending the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland for three years to get his specialization in couples and family therapy.

Karl worked 35 years as a clinical social worker and consultant in several locations around Pennsylvania and Ohio. Karl had worked as a counselor at a state correctional

institution in Mansfield and Richland County Jail. He was an avid West Virginia University Mountaineers fan but his love of the Mountaineers was exceeded only by his love and appreciation for fine foods. He will be remembered as a man who was passionate about his interests and his work.

In 1983 Karl married Mary Jane Duffey, who preceded him in death in 1997. Karl was also preceded in death by his parents. Karl is survived by a sister, Laura Walker and a brother **Frank '70** of Melbourne, FL.

**Geoffrey David '72** son of **Lawrence** and **Martha David** both **Faculty** members from **1971-1976**, died at age 64 on September 10, 2018. He was born on August 7, 1954 and is survived by his sister Dee David.



**Patrick M. Gallagher '76** of Fairfax, VA passed away on August 29, 2017. He is survived by his mother, Cecilia; three brothers, **Chuck '74**, **Mike '77**, and **Tom '81**; sister, **Mary '85**; his three sisters-in-law, nieces, and a nephew plus many friends. His father, Charles passed away in 2003.

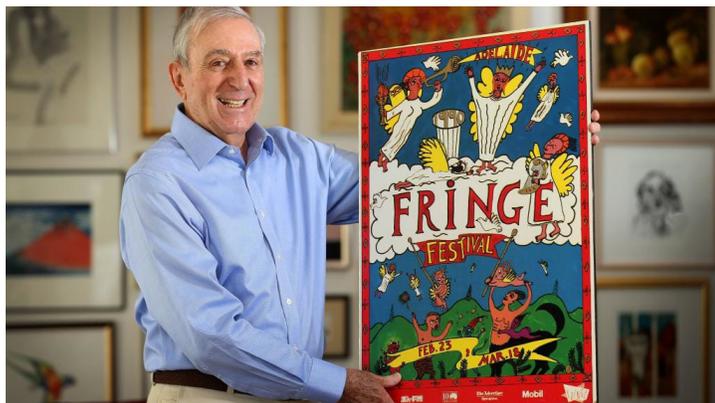
## In Memoriam Continued

**Frank Ford Fac** died in Australia in early October 2018.

Jennifer Layther, from Arts South Australia, described Ford as “a luminary of South Australia’s arts and cultural sector for more than 50 years. As the founding Chair of the Adelaide Fringe, and the driving force behind the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, as well as a leading light within many arts organisations from the Adelaide Festival to Australian Dance Theatre (ADT) and Country Arts SA, Frank was not only a dynamic and passionate advocate for the arts, he was part of the bedrock upon which South Australia’s ‘festival state’ was built,” Layther said. “His loss will be deeply felt by the entire arts community.”

He was for years head of the Department of Drama at the University of Adelaide, having taken his masters in fine arts at Columbia University in New York, with further studies at Harvard and Sydney University. In Adelaide he was the teacher, mentor, and guide to a generation of those involved in all parts of the theatre and performing arts industry here. He was also active as a writer and director in Adelaide, and an honorary member of Actors Equity the theatre division of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

He is survived by his long-time partner Sam Harvey. Source: [adelaidenow.com.au](http://adelaidenow.com.au)



## Summer in the City – Minneapolis

By Cathy Bruder '77

Our belated SITC gathering of alums occurred Thursday, 20 September 2018, at **Bernadette Samanant-McCormick's '77** home. Of the 25 total alumni listed for the entire state of Minnesota, six attended with three regrets - so a decent response rate of 25% on a weeknight with torrential rain causing local flooding on the highways!

Bernadette graciously hosted a dinner and invited all to tell their “story” of Lebanon. Wael was amazed to learn that so many other ACSers lived nearby and we made him promise to attend the next reunion in Salt Lake City. Our visiting class of '77 guests rallied to support **Melo Soghanalian-Hansen '77** in her efforts to chair the ACS reunion in 2019. Becky brought wonderful baklava and Donna shared great stories of her early years at ACS and gave me the name of her favorite Lebanese restaurant in the Twin Cities. Margaret's daughter joined us later, bringing along two visitors from Sweden so we all had a lot to talk about. As I just moved to Minneapolis in March, I was happy to have a chance to connect with old friends and learn about the area.



Front Row: **Donna Fakhreddine Fac, Becky Swenson-Hamoud '70, Wael Awada '15, out-of-state guest Melo Soghanalian-Hansen '77, Bernadette Samanant-McCormick '77, out-of-state guest Karen Hajj '77**

Back Row: out-of-state guest **Leslie Parker-Nelson '77, Cathy Bruder '77, Margaret Samanant-Jones '76**

# Class of 1968 Celebrates their Fiftieth Reunion in Seattle

By Joy Martin

Forty members of the ACS class of 1968 convened for our 50th reunion in Seattle October 5 - 7, along with four faculty members from our time at ACS and some alums from other classes, '67, '69, and '70. Many people were attending an ACS reunion for the first time, and some came from as far away as Europe.

There is something particularly intense about meeting as a class, as opposed to an all-school reunion. For the most part, except for a few people who had left ACS some years before graduation, everyone knew everyone, and those who didn't know everyone, knew someone. We knew the teachers, **Bill Blakemore, Bob Foster, Sarah Rich, and Art Hebert**. Sometimes we had to squint a bit to recognize each other, but mostly we didn't have to squint at all! Because of knowing each other, however long ago, we often felt like we were just picking up from yesterday in our conversations. And many people wished they had longer than a weekend to talk!

After a Friday night reception, a slide show allowed those who wanted to, to say something about their lives, at ACS or after. Many people felt it was a magical evening, and some were even close to tears, faculty included.

Thanks to wonderful work by a program committee headed by **Dorinda Dorsey**, on Saturday there were discussions with faculty, and several talks presented on the Middle East by people who still go there regularly. In a program ably and gracefully chaired by **Ann McDonald-Dold**, Bill Blakemore talked about the climate crisis and the necessity of stopping temperatures which could

lead to the extinction of humanity. A dinner at Daniel's Broiler on Lake Union near the Center for Wooden Boats included group photos, cameras flashing everywhere, and continued conversations and some standup talks by those who hadn't had slides.

On Sunday a group tentatively titled "The Enormity Project", met with Bill about trying to solve global warming in a year, with ACS minds meeting. Also Sunday some went sightseeing in Seattle and met over breakfast or lunch or dinner, creating new memories as alumni began departing one by one.

Talk is of another class reunion soon....so class members who could not attend....keep ideas and suggestions coming. We have still so many wonderful photos from the past at ACS and from the reunion coming in. The class of 1968 made a group gift of \$2055 to the **Malcolm Kerr '49** Endowment in addition to individual gifts.

You might want to check out an old Radio Lebanon performance and interview by '68ers **Peggy Atwood, Jan Harris, Dave Gonshor, and Chris Khattar '69** on YouTube: <https://tinyurl.com/yat5s8bw>. Such beautiful singing! Such beautiful memories!



Back row: Rob Sivak, Bill McClelland Laziza, Blane Ryan Henley, Steve Patterson, Phil Davies '67, Mark Williams, Irene Saba-Marie, Jeff Chaffin, Tom Najemy, Don Maxwell  
Middle row: Art Hebert Fac, Linda Handschin-Sheppard, Jim Richards, Ted Swedenburg, Ted Seto '69, Nick Bromell, Bill Blakemore Fac, Sarah Rich Fac, Geoff Braun, Jane Kilgore, Bob Foster, Hilary Smith-Bowker, Marty Tune-Briggs, Jenell Howard McGee, Cheryl Hanna-Pereira, Sally Onnen-Duncan, Dorinda Dorsey (hidden), David Hamilton, Barbara Muller, Christine Wynne  
Front row: Carolyn Bates-Bonner, Christine Littlejohn Wheeler, Catherine Graham-Kelly, Ann Kirkendall-Stewart, Sherri Allen-Wright, Marcia Tabor-VanSkiver, Jane Christopherson, Joy Martin behind Pam Shannon, Pam Wagner-Langfitt, Joanne Markarian-Kubler, Ann McDonald Dold, Peggy Atwood, Kim Henry, Neil Dale (hidden), Fred Rogers  
Photo courtesy of Spencer Chaney and Don Maxwell.

# Shipboard Romances: A Foreign Service Dependent Story

By George Herrmann '63

On leaving our assignment to India in 1959, my father again booked us on steam ships for our return to the United States. Travel by air was becoming cheaper for the government, and the required use of aircraft for Permanent Change of Stations was right around the corner, but it was not yet the Jet Age, and we were allowed to go by ship. Checking with the Consulate's Travel Section, we found that no American Flag Carriers serviced Bombay: we would have to travel by a foreign ship until we reached a point where we could transfer to an American vessel. That port turned out to be Naples, Italy. Since we were headed for Italy, we chose the *SS Asia*, an Italian luxury liner, as our ship for the first leg of this journey. I was 14 at the time.

I had told my friends that the *SS Asia* was due to depart at noon. A girl I liked and her parents planned to come and see us off, but they were delayed in traffic. At about ten minutes before noon, we were lined up on the Promenade Deck to wave goodbye to our friends, and the ship's stewards passed out rolls and rolls of colored paper streamers long enough to reach all the way to the quay. At noon, big hawsers tying the ship to the pier were taken in, a tugboat arrived to tow us out into the harbor and I spotted my girlfriend and her parents running to try and get abreast of the ship. I tossed several streamers to her, which she was able to catch, but the relentless movement of the ship tore the streamers apart: very symbolic. In a short time, we were out in the harbor, our well-wishers were out of sight and the ship's engines started up.

The *Asia* docked in Karachi, Pakistan the next evening. On the following day, another American family came aboard: let's call them the Crosbys. They had several children, including a young man who was eighteen and a pretty daughter who was a year younger than I was: let's call her Connie. We found ourselves engaged in a lot of activities with the Crosbys almost immediately, exploring the ship, going on guided tours, playing deck games, and enjoying the pool. Connie and I paired off rather quickly. There were several movies to watch in the ship's theater each day, and we gradually spent a

lot of time romancing in the darkened movie theater. When we were not watching movies, we were busy with shuffleboard and ping pong.

The ship made stops in Aden, Port Said, Alexandria, Beirut, and Athens before heading to Italy. At each of these ports of call we went ashore, did some shopping or sight-seeing or both, and went back aboard. In Port Said, we took camels to go and see the pyramids, then took a car to Cairo to see the British Museum, and picked up the *Asia* again in Alexandria after it transited the Suez Canal. In Athens, we made another visit to the Parthenon, where polished marble steps seem to get smoother and easier to slip on every time I have toured the place. Finally, we pulled in to Naples, where we had to wait five days until our ongoing vessel arrived.

On the first of these five days, we went to Pompeii to look at the ruins and the museum, containing fabulous plaster casts of cavities in the volcanic ash made by residents of Pompeii and their pets who were caught in the AD 79 eruption of Vesuvius. These casts can be viewed on the internet, and are amazing in their detail, showing mothers holding children to try and protect them, men in terror and dogs frozen in positions of agony. On the next day, we visited Vesuvius and were actually able to walk down into the cone of the volcano, which still had traces of hot magma near the surface. Our Italian guide had a walking stick with him, and would occasionally poke it into the loose, granular rock here and there to release a burst of steam. I remember thinking that the inside of the cone looked like someone had poured box after box of multi-colored Kellogg's Kix into it: most of the coloring was yellow, brown, and red.

On the fourth day, our family took the opportunity to visit Rome. We engaged a large car (there were seven of us) and a driver who spoke English, and we drove up the coast to the Italian capital. We stopped at an Italian restaurant for lunch, then spent the first afternoon exploring the catacombs beneath the city. On the second day, we visited the Vatican. My mother

## Shipboard Romances Continued

was wearing a dress with short sleeves that day, and the Swiss Guards would not let her enter St. Peter's Cathedral. We saw the Sistine Chapel, the Pieta, and other works by Michelangelo. We visited the Coliseum on our final day, and then headed back to Naples.

We repacked our suitcases and headed for our second ship, the SS *Constitution*. This was a large American luxury liner, with three classes of travelers aboard. We were traveling first class, and to my surprise the Crosbys were also booked on the second ship all the way back to New York. Connie and I resumed our relationship, and discovered that we could watch movies in both the first class and the second class theaters. By this time, our parents had started to keep an eye on us, and sometimes sent my brother or her brother to find us and ask us to come up for air, or at least for a meal. This last directive was actually important on both ships, as we were required to dress for dinner.

The *Constitution* stopped in Genoa, Marseille, and Barcelona on our way home. I remember that we visited a fortress in Marseille and an interesting old city in Barcelona where Spanish crafts were reconstructed and where I saw glassblowing for the first time. After that, it was back to the ship, and back to the theaters, all the way to New York.

Upon our return, I went to two years of high school in Bethesda, Maryland. After this interval, we were reassigned to the American Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, where my father was to complete the FSI Arabic Language course. I was enrolled in the American Community School in Beirut, and made a lot of friends at my small new school.

On the first day of my senior year, I went into the ACS student lounge. A beautiful girl, new to the boarding department, walked up to me and introduced herself: Connie Crosby! Both of us dated other people that year, but we found it to be a remarkably small world.



View of Ain Mreisse, Beirut Oil painting by Franz Burgstaller '68  
Courtesy of Ray Ruehl Fac

# ACS Triennial Reunion- August 8-11, 2019

## Salt Lake City, Utah

If you have attended any of our reunions in the past, you will know what it means to gather with people who have experienced the inexplicable opportunity of living in Beirut and attending ACS. If you have not yet been to a reunion, then now is the time! In addition to our traditional Friday class gatherings and Reunion Choir performance, there will be the Saturday night banquet, Sunday breakfast, and the option to attend a free live broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on Sunday morning. (Other activities are in the works and will be revealed as we get closer to the reunion date.) Being with friends and former schoolmates is worth the trip!

Nestled on the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and overlooking the largest inland lake in the western US, Salt Lake City is home to a pioneering past, and an exciting future. The thriving urban heart that beats in the Salt Lake Valley is home to the NBA's Utah Jazz and the renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir. From a top-shelf performing arts scene to award winning dining and craft beer, this Old West town has become a forward-thinking, and burgeoning urban hub.

Against the backdrop of this historic and beautiful city, we will be hosting our ACS Triennial Reunion!

- **HOTEL:** The Little America Hotel, book your room through our reunion site at [www.acsreunion.com](http://www.acsreunion.com). Be sure to book a Tower Room in the AA/ACS block to get our discount rate of \$159/night. (You will be disappointed with a less expensive room in a different area of the hotel.)
- **REGISTRATION:** Online see [www.acs.edu.lb/REUNION](http://www.acs.edu.lb/REUNION) or through regular mail. You will receive a hard copy registration form shortly.

Cost of registration is \$175 until February 15. Cost will increase to \$200 on February 16 and all registrations MUST be received by July 8. There will be no refunds for cancellations after July 8.

We will continue to update *The Potrzebie* and our website with information as it becomes available. Our reunion committee is hard at work and welcomes any help you can offer. Visit [acsreunion.com](http://acsreunion.com) to volunteer. See you in August!