

the diaspora potrezebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

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President's Message

For the last few months, we had been focused on the financial strains that Lebanon and ACS were facing. The currency had devalued over 80%, and access to capital was constrained. On top of that, ACS was planning for the next school year in the middle of a pandemic. When thinking about what the country and our beloved school were facing, it just seemed almost insurmountable. But the school survived the civil war without closing, so we knew we could get through this too.

Then the most unthinkable tragedy of the port blast happened and brought even more serious challenges to this country that has had such a huge impact on all our lives. Since then, so many of you have contacted me asking about how the school fared, and how you could help. While the campus is still structurally sound, there is a lot of damage to some classrooms and offices. Based on the fact that everything needed to be repaired before school could start, we put out a solicitation for donation to the Relief Fund that was created to support this effort. The response has been encouraging, and very much appreciated.

As we navigate through the pandemic times ourselves (wherever you are), and adjust to ZOOM calls, masks, and social distancing, it's comforting that the alumni community is a tight knit group that cares for one another. Asking for donations during "normal" times is one thing; but soliciting while many can be struggling is another. But the community has come through, showing concern and donating if they can, knowing that every little bit helps. I'm proud to be a member of this very special group of people.

On behalf of the Alumni Council, a committed group that cares deeply for the school, and its alumni, I thank you for your continued care for our school....ACS Beirut.



Gina Kano – Class of 1973
President AA/ACS

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The Diaspora Potrzebie

Editor

Jay Bruder '74 (since 2020)
Phone: 703-765-1215 (Eastern Time)
Email: alumni@acs.edu

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]
Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68, Editor 2013-2020

Contributing Staff

Lina Safa, Director of Research & Development Services
Office of Development & Alumni Relations
Faten Hayek, Assistant to the Office of Development & Alumni Relations

Executive Committee and Representatives

President, Gina Kano '73, ginakano1@gmail.com
Vice President Yasmin Agha '04, ymagha86@gmail.com
Treasurer, Leonard Smith '67, leonard.smith@telesis-usa.com
Secretary, Donna Harms-Hansen '74, 32Aruba@comcast.net

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Websites

ACS at Beirut: www.acs.edu.lb
ACS Matters: www.acs.edu.lb/page.cfm?p=1326
Al Mashriq The Levantine
Cultural Riches from the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean
<https://almashriq.hiof.no>
Webmaster: The late Børre Ludvigsen '64

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Class of 1970 Zoom 50th Reunion!

Reported by Anne Bruder '70

On June 20 we had 39 ACS 1970 alums online for our 50th reunion. **Marilyn Horbaly-Comfort** and her brother **Bill '77**, who was an enterprising filmmaker, captured part of our graduation, so we shared the clip, and we each had a two-minute 50-year catch-up slide. There was lots of laughter and we agreed to exchange participants' emails. More Zoom calls/happy hours have/will happen, but we don't have any plans for a face-to-face reunion at the moment. I want to thank **Kathy Moore-Grant, Robert Reeves, Holly Mak, Nancy Muller** and **Jim Braddock** for all their work—it certainly would not have happened without them!

ACS Class of 1973 Zoom Call

Reported by Richie Hanna '73

I had a very neat Zoom chat with about 20 members of "the Great Class of '73" of the American Community School at Beirut. Two were in Amsterdam, one in Oslo, Norway, one in Beirut, and the rest scattered all over the USA. It was sweet and cool and poignant and meaningful and informative and a wonderful way to connect with and get close to long-time friends in this time of social distancing. Since we are all about 65 years old Medicare was one of the things we talked about - surprise!!! Thanks, **Gina Kano**, for setting it up, happy birthday, **David Allen** and I look forward to doing it again!!!

With **Delinda Hanley, Randi Young, Sheila Graham-Smith, René Hopen, Catherine Essoyan, Sara Whitney, Muriel Brunger, Margaret Kelberer, Jeanie Mullin-Valentine, Elise Russell, Anne Fawaz-Lopez, Noreen O'Donnell, Linda Speed, Maureen Beurskens, Joeske Stil.**

ACS Class of 1977 Zoom Call

Reported by Leslie Parker '77

Technology is awesome in this strange new world. Eighteen members of the class of 1970 connected. It took three Zoom sessions of 40 minutes each to make sure we heard from everyone. Love that I had the experience of living in Beirut and making these lifelong connections! We had classmates spread all the way from Hawaii to Lebanon, including Uganda in the middle, and many places in mainland USA.

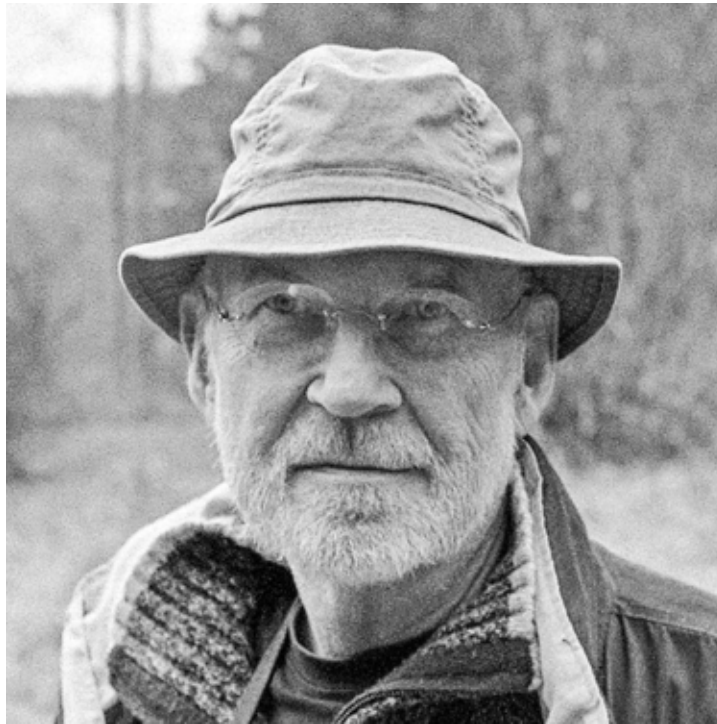
In Memorium Børre Johan Ludvigsen '64

By Jay Bruder '74

In every generation ACS produces students who go on to make extraordinary contributions to the school and the country of Lebanon. Børre Ludvigsen who passed peacefully in his sleep on March 30, 2020 was one of those few. He was born in Norway in 1946. His father, Walther, brought the family to Sidon, Lebanon in 1951 where he worked as a ship's pilot for the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company (Tapline) at the Zahrani Terminal. His mother, Margrethe, was a "children's nurse" in World War II Norway. He attended the Tapline school through the 7th grade where he learned that English speakers—young and old—became tongue-tied at the sight of an "O" with slash through it. Most would struggle and pronounce his name as "Bo-ree." In reality the combination of the "Ø" and the doubled "R" requires pronunciation skills generally beyond the reach of non-native speakers of Norwegian. By the time he transferred to ACS in the 8th grade he had Americanized his name to "Barre" which most classmates pronounced as "Barry." It was a fair approximation of the correct pronunciation and an early indication of his ability to put those around him at ease.

Perhaps our much respected ACS art teacher, **Ray Ruehl Fac**, best sums up his time at ACS:

Børre Ludvigsen did this pen and ink drawing of the old Lebanese house adjacent to ACS when he was in my 11th grade art class. I can still vividly remember our first meeting three years earlier. At the beginning of the school year, this red headed eighth grade kid walked into my classroom and introduced himself. We



talked briefly and I thought at the time: 'This kid is something special!' And that certainly proved to be true. Little did I realise then that Børre and I would maintain a friendship for over 60 years, and that Børre would eventually become my teacher and I his student. We saw each other infrequently: in Norway, in London, and in the States. For me each meeting was an adventure for Børre always knew of artistic and historic treasures, hidden away that were seldom visited but very worthwhile.

Børre was a connection to ACS and Lebanon for many people when he was with us, and his photographs will remain a

valuable archive for all those who lived in or are interested in the Middle East. His mammoth photo archive documented his travels as well as the rebirth of Lebanon after the civil war. I had moved to London, but he sought out the site of my old house in Ain Mreisse, and sent me a photo of the soaring modern building now occupying the site."

Ray only hints at the depth of Børre's talents and contributions. From ACS he studied architecture at the Kingston College of

Art near London. His parents remained in Sidon until 1971, but Børre would return to Lebanon many, many times. He practiced architecture in the 1970s and 1980s. He was an early adopter of computer technology in heady days when the World Wide Web was new and full of promise and goodwill, and Europeans seemed to be the leading innovators. By 1987 he became a visiting professor of Information Technology at the Oslo School of



Børre Johan Ludvigsen continued



Architecture. In 1990 he left private architecture practice to teach computer science and research at Østfold University College where he transitioned to emeritus status in 2016.

Chris Lund '64 picks up the story: One of Børre's main accomplishments is Al Mashriq (The Levant), a webserver which Børre described as a repository for cultural multimedia (primarily photos, texts) information from the Levant) in general and Lebanon in particular: it contains over 245,000 documents and is still growing. It was started as an initiative by Berthe Choueiry in 1993 and was for a while a server at the École Polytechnic Federal de Lausanne. The site was moved in 1994 to become a World Wide Web server at the Østfold University College in Norway where it still resides. Børre was a website pioneer and Al Mashriq was one of the most extensive sites in the mid to late-90s.

Berthe Choueiry adds: "Børre gets all the credit for Al Mashriq. I had

minimally contributed to an earlier version of that extensive site. Børre was one of the most generous and gentle people that I have ever met. He made me feel as if I had always known him although we mainly corresponded by email and met only once, briefly, when he stopped over at the Geneva Airport between flights. He was a faithful soul, firm in his beliefs, committed to every enterprise that he undertook, and undeterred by the enormity of any challenge. He took it upon himself not only to preserve the memory of the crumbling Lebanon, but to build, for this forsaken country, an honorable past at a time where many natives, including myself, have sadly long ago fled away, given up, tried hard to turn the page."

As an adjunct to the website, Børre created an ACS-focused listserv at a time when that was ground breaking technology. At its peak in the 1990s several hundred ACS alumni followed the daily twists and turns of postings to the list. It was the place to go to have the most current information on ACS, the alumni association, and goings on in Beirut and Lebanon. It is safe to say that many of these reluctant computer users (both older and younger than Børre) overcame their computer phobia so that they could at least follow developments on the listserv.

A spinoff from the list was a series of three paperback books on the subject of growing up with the uncertainties of life in the Middle East under the series theme "When Not If." **Anne Peet-Carrington '70** served as his co-editor on these works and her tribute to Børre follows shortly. In 2014 Børre also published Wade Morris' *A History of ACS* through Al Mashriq.

And then there are the photographs. You have seen Børre's work frequently in *The Potrzebie*, including our last issue in March 2020. As an artist and architect, and a student of things old and interesting, Børre was an avid photographer since he was a child. Hundreds of his photos are publicly posted on Al Mashriq site.

Børre kept quiet about his personal life. He married his first wife, Eva, when he was studying in London. He is greatly missed by his two grown children, Sebastian (50) and Antonia (47) and three grandchildren. He and current his wife, Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, have been together since 2003, and they had a daughter, Miriam in 2015. Toufoul is an Associate Professor of Modern Middle East History at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo. Both Toufoul and Miriam feature in Børre's wonderful photos from Lebanon.

And finally a comment from his sister, **Alice Ludvigsen '70**, about his other, personal website: "This was his "heart" on the internet.

Børre Johan Ludvigsen continued

It has his curriculum vitae, his informal biography, and most importantly, I think, his photographic record of trips to Lebanon. He was a wonderful photographer, as many will know, and had been taking pictures since childhood. So, I think the place to start is: <https://abdallah.hiof.no/>.

We all miss him dreadfully - he has left a huge hole in our lives."



Børre and his sister Alice deep in discussion. Taken by his wife Toufoul Abou-Hodeib

Toufoul, Miriam, and Alice are not alone in missing Børre. *The Potrzebie* received an avalanche of memorial notes.

From **Ivar Walde '64**: My first memory of Børre was from 12 January, 1957. I had been in Lebanon for a mere one and a half days, and here was this guy – speaking Norwegian! As well as English! And Arabic! Fluently, as it turned out. I was amazed.

Even at this hour-long first meeting, I formed an impression of him which lasted a lifetime: Børre was curious and inquisitive – about everything. He needed to know how things worked, why and how they were formed the way they were, and how they might conceivably be improved upon. He could spend what seemed like endless hours pondering and experimenting, and he never tired of scrutinizing the object of his attention. Nothing was too big or too small to crave his careful examination. In short, he could be a pain in the ass.

When I went to ACS in 1960, Børre was already there. I was there for only two years; Børre had all four, graduating in 1964. He loved ACS. He came to a school which encouraged him to engage himself in complex and interesting questions, and Børre responded fully to

every challenge. Later in life, he repeatedly shared his memories of his teachers, who he lauded without exception. Ray Ruehl was evidently his favorite: In most conversations the two of us had over the years, Mr. Ruehl figured large, and it was clear that he was a major source of inspiration. Børre repeatedly detailed what they had talked about, and what Ruehl had taught him, e.g. about forms and shapes and colors. So when Børre, after graduating from ACS, chose to go to London to study architecture, it came as no surprise.

I believe Børre felt a sense of indebtedness to ACS, evidence of which is Al Mashriq and the ACS list that he created and monitored over the course of many years. He loved Lebanon and Beirut, and as soon as the war was over, he went back, thereafter to work part-time for many years at AUB in addition to his job as professor at a college in Halden, Norway. It was at AUB he met Toufoul; they married and had Miriam, a perfectly delightful little girl who will not have her father there when she celebrates her fifth birthday later this fall.



Børre Johan Ludvigsen continued



Many people feel a sense of loss after Børre's passing. I am one such. He is very much missed.

The White Rabbit by **Anne Peet Carrington '70**

My first impression of Børre as a power was his way of managing the listserve page of ACS alumni, which predated Facebook and other social media. Discussions could get hot, but he was always able to spritz and fan without undue feather ruffling.

Very sane and even. When Facebook did come along, he didn't have anything nice to say about it, and in fact at one point in our editing work, he suggested somewhat bitterly that a certain aspect of one of the stories would be more appropriate to Facebook than to our project. To say such a thing, showed me instantly that he hadn't read the story. But he came to like FB, to the extent that he would post jabs at "Big Foot", the sad state of world affairs, along

with maps and graphs, finally, of the Covid-19 pandemic. He'd even occasionally comment on friends' pages. One of Børre's final posts, on the evening before his departure, was a lovely photograph of his wife Toufoul looking bemused over his ten volume set of Latham & Matthews Samuel Pepys diaries. It was because of Børre that I read and relished this uncensored version, which details the Great London Plague of the 1600s (among other fascinations). My last words to Børre were there, on Facebook: "Thank you."

What a brilliant mind! What singular wit! It was such a joy to work with him on the three books. So strange and wonderful, how it all came about...the pitch down his rabbit hole, through that photograph of the "stinky stairs"...with fig leaves filtering the light over those old stone walls, into the massive stairway, now sealed away, rubble-strewn and viewed through a closed gate. I was immediately seized by the need to communicate with whoever had taken this photo. Having been away from ACS for 37 years, I had only then entered the computer world (barely speaking pigeon computerese), and had started fishing around the internet. It was the work of a moment to find myself slowly falling, out of control... through an amazement of memory, with an intensity of feeling, entirely overwhelming. When I followed the link, I found a person named Ludvigsen. Could this be the brother of my fun art class friend? Of course it was Børre. It was he, who I "spoke" with first, after 37 years away from Lebanon, and the school...pouring out tales of places, people, and situations, through my little iBook G4. And in his reserved manner, he was not startled, nor did he rebuke me, in the least. Instead, he turned me onto the listserve page for AA/ACS, which he managed, and I was immediately among people I'd wondered about so many, many times, in all those many, many years. Act of generosity upon act of generosity. He, the White Rabbit, had led me back to Alice. What a joy to reconnect with her and other pals of those ACS days!

The three books were a kind of Wonderland...openings into so many lives and experiences which came to clarify so much about my own family's life in Lebanon. Somehow, on the list-serve, the subject of the '67 War came up, causing quite a storm of interest, resulting in my suggestion that we all write our stories and print up a little mag/rag. I'd thought very carefully about this, before suggesting it, knowing it could well be Pandora's Box. I was entirely astonished to have Børre's response...that it most certainly should be done, but only in book form. He'd just done a memoir project, and had a program which he'd been using with success, which would be the perfect vehicle for this new project. Again, this spirit of generosity and energy! Infectious, too...lighting an equally bright spirit among our contributing writers.

Børre Johan Ludvigsen continued

The work was fun... we didn't make a real plan, we just began. Happening only because of Børre's insatiable appetite for new projects using new tools and processes he'd recently learned and mastered. This extension of prodigious expertise, to those around him was entirely characteristic. Børre quite naturally acted as a conduit, so naturally collaborative. He truly loved work and was clearly happiest when madly productive.

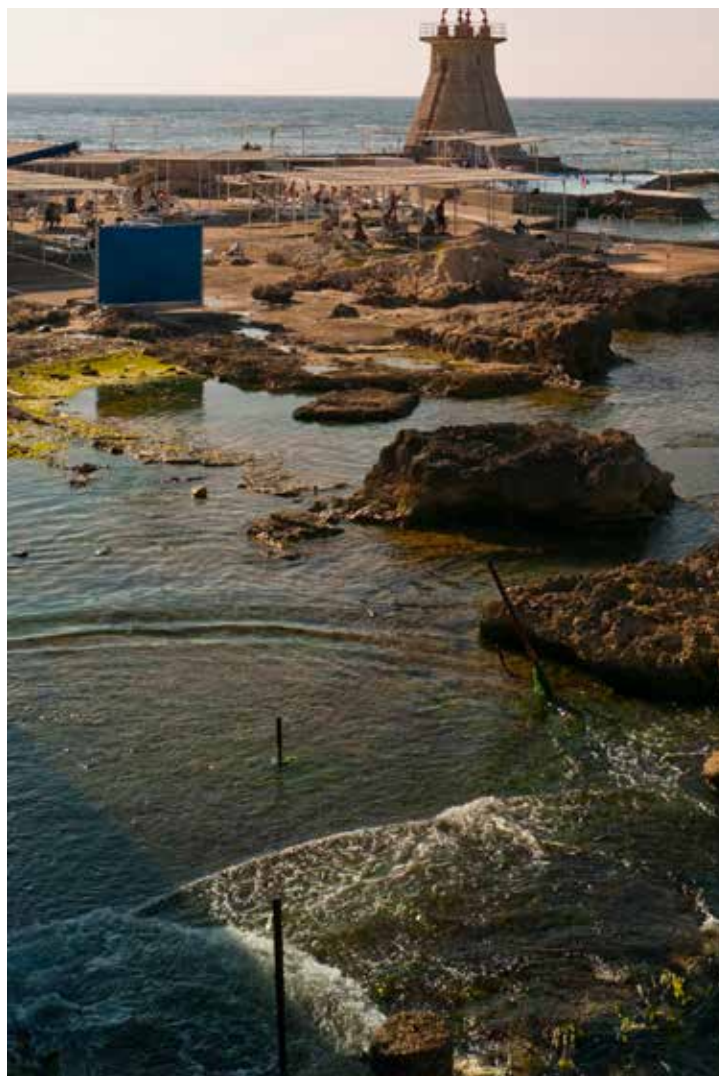
Three years and three books. Everything was done by email. I never met him in person. We never spoke by phone, throughout the entire project. All our work was done, with everyone, over the internet. He and I both got a big kick out of that. The labor was intense, but offset by perfectly marvelous communications with all the wonderful ACSers whose prodigious writing work was sometimes accompanied also by photos and drawings. All the books were illuminated by Børre's photographs and graphics.

His enthusiasm for photographic additions could get out of hand, creating dissonance for the reader, but thankfully he would listen to reason, even if there might be a bit of a tussle before the offending picture was removed. Another enthusiasm was for the footnote. He was the one to design all three covers which feature his knock-out photos, though I got to weigh in on the choice/placement of images and titles.

The tail end of the books project saw problems, which resulted in ill feelings, so I was relieved and amused to get a surprise phone call from Børre, as an effort to bring peace. This was the only time we actually spoke to each other. I'd had no idea his name was pronounced "Barry", so the conversation was steeped in hilarity, from the onset.

First acquaintances, then friends, we became regular correspondents, sharing mutual fascinations about such things as Pepys, ships, life in Lebanon, medical weirdness, and visual art. It seems that the only music which moved him was a particular vein of Arabic music, for which he'd send links, with hours of entertainment. He loved mechanics and electronics of all sorts, and would send intriguing photos, like that of his fold-up bike which he'd refurbished to give electrical assist. Being mischievous and knowing I was suffering chronic illness, he'd test my squeamishness by sending horrid photos of cancers being burned off his face, and the subsequent scabbing over. And always, he'd send new beautiful photographic images from his travels. Sometimes I'd get a glimpse of family. I don't believe he ever traveled as a mere tourist. Travel seemed always based on some collaboration, research or work.

We ACSers know him as a computer wizard, but we don't



necessarily know his work pioneering the development of internet use in Norway, and a vast digital archive of culture and history for AUB, as well as current systems for university records, research, and publications there. He'd graduated from ACS to study architecture in London, and as I understand it, his first big project was a plan to expand ACS. He had a thing for the school, its personalities, culture, and history. He created and maintained various systems for ACS over time, though I don't know that those earlier expansion plans were ever put to use. I wish I knew more about the archaeological marine explorations, involving the retrieval of clay pipes, off the coast of Norway. I'd know much less about him, if I hadn't on so many occasions rooted around in his fabulous website Al Mashriq. If you haven't explored this wonder hole of an archive, you're in for a glorious treat! He made it for all of us.

Do check out the online AUB tribute to Professor Børre Ludvigsen.

Børre Johan Ludvigsen continued



You'll find his image...amused, while uncharacteristically coiffed and ironed, with an overlay of dozens tiny lines and connected dots. Those whiskery lines denote the pattern of his life...extension cords of constant connection with so many people, engaged in so many activities. Such activity! Such zeal! Such tremendous vitality!

He cautioned against nostalgia, yet he was a major hub of connection to all of our pasts at ACS, in Lebanon, and the greater Middle East. Those pasts, enlivened through this interconnectedness, create our vital present. How was it that he could so dexterously and effortlessly collaborate with so many? Granted, he was good at anything he put his hand or head to, but there's something more. His singular lack of sentimentality is somewhere at that core...his ability to stay somewhat separate, even if he seemed to really like working with other people. Ever on the hunt for openings to new thought and work, he'd welcome you

to jump on, if you could keep up.

I hadn't known him at ACS. It was his sister Alice who was my fun high school friend. He was six years older. He was a boarder. I was a day student. But Børre and I had much in common. We'd both come to Lebanon at about the same age...he at 6 (1951) and I at 5 (1958). We both experienced local village life, though in very different locales. My experience with AUB was as a child, though. His was as an adult, even in my parents' role...as professor. My experience at AUB hospital was as a sick patient in quarantine (as a 2nd grader in Miss Carlin's class, who later became **Mrs. Bashshur Fac**), whereas his was as a digital documentation pioneer. At this later time, he took marvelous magical photos of the American University of Beirut campus and the surrounding neighborhoods of Ras Beirut. Once again, I saw the hallways I knew as a child, and saw how Post Hall, with its collections of antiquities, and geological relics, had been made into lovely museums. Through his photos, I walked the paths and drives around ancient banyan trees, where we used to play for hours, swinging on the long tendrils. It's just impossible to describe, adequately, this return to a place I'd never had the chance to return to...this lost world. Revelatory, to see and feel these places we knew, again, which had been a petri dish of sorts, for my whole family. To sense all the people we knew there, too.

How can you not become attached to a person, so giving...a person who makes so many openings for you and so many others, and who is so inclusive? His tremendous energy and interest in his fellow humans enabled him to do this with most anyone who bothered to communicate with him...all, happily swept up. He could be amazingly patient, but he hated to waste time or to have his time wasted. Life was so precious...there was too much to do! So, away he'd go, each time...haring off to his idyllic briar patch. We were the lucky ones.

I'd like to extend my condolences to all of Børre's acquaintances, pals, colleagues, and family.

From **Mary Ledbetter-Tabakow '62**: Because Børre Ludvigsen was such a vital person, it's hard to write about him in the past tense. Two defining characteristics, I think, are that first, he excelled at connecting people and second, felt deeply the desperation of less fortunate people, especially if they were refugees. His and his family's formative experiences in Lebanon had a lot to do with that.

Someone else who knew him well, his ACS art/ art history teacher Ray Ruehl, stated Børre was the hub of countless friendships and a "great connector." I am an example. After too many years as a

Børre Johan Ludvigsen continued

“lost” ACS 1962 alumnus and noting Børre Ludvigsen’s name listed on the Board of Governors, I wrote and was rewarded by Børre’s passing along Ray Ruehl’s U.S. address, educationally important because long ago, along with **Jane Monroe Fac** (then an ACS math teacher), Mr. Ruehl had provided my friend **Vicky Helling ‘62** and me with a once-in-a-lifetime chance to tour Egypt before our graduation in 1962. This was an offer we couldn’t refuse – and Børre knew it. He and I had bonded in Ray’s art class over drawing and art history. Børre had a keen, sophisticated interest in architecture, able to explain the Bauhaus School and Mies van der Rohe’s role without sounding pompous. When I’d told him Vicky’s and my parents had agreed we could tag along with “Mr. Ruehl” to Egypt, he declared, “You’ll never regret it.” Thus, much later, in 2004, he could write: “I’ve been to few reunions, but I would really have loved to be there when you and Ray met again and had a ‘60s color slide show-fest!” He probably felt this way due to Ray’s being “probably the single most influential person in my life... opening up the world of the arts, all seven of them.”



Børre’s mother (right), Jorund Margrethe Ludvigsen (née Tønnevoid) caring for children at Aline’s Home for Single Mothers & Their Children, Oslo, Norway in 1943.

Another characteristic, a lifelong compassion for the plight of refugees, can probably be traced to both his and his parents’ long stay in Lebanon and his generous spirit, along with his becoming fluent in spoken and written Arabic, enough to do archival work for AUB. In January 2020, he wrote about a sad refugee case in Norway, saying “the whole thing got me really worked up.” This had reminded him of his mother’s experiences after “she’d trained as a children’s nurse” in Norway near the end of WWII, worked at Aline’s Orphanage in Oslo, and later witnessed refugee women’s and children’s medical problems after the Ludvigsen family relocated to Lebanon and “moved to a house on the side of a hill



between the Ain el Helwe and Mieh ou Mieh refugee camps” near Sidon. He estimated “about 25,000 Palestinian refugees lived there at that time. A few days after their arrival, refugee women with their children would come to the Ludvigsens’ gate, hoping “for help and advice,” and it seems his mother and others at Tapline persuaded UNRWA that the situation required “organizing services for the camps.” So shortly thereafter, “a Swedish pediatric nurse came down from Beirut two days a week.” Nevertheless, that did not address nutrition issues. Børre’s mother had direct knowledge of this when Børre’s sister Alice was born in 1952. He recounted the following: Just after my sister was born at Khalil’s Hospital in Sidon, Dr. Khalil [himself] came to my mother to ask a favor. “You are a strong and healthy woman, Mrs. Ludvigsen. In the next room I have an undernourished mother from the refugee camp who is unable to nurse her son. Would you consider helping?” Without

Børre Johan Ludvigsen continued



hesitation, Børre's mother fed both her Alice and the refugee baby boy, likely giving him a good start while his mother recovered her health. Years later, Børre said she'd wanted to maintain contact and hoped to find them through a Norwegian program that "reunited long estranged relatives," but this was not to be. Due to turmoil in the region, records were lost, and the hospital closed during the civil war. When Børre ended this 2020 email, he wrote that Aline's Orphanage of the 1940s, where his mother had done her training, was still active "just up the road" near his current home in Oslo and had become "an institution that takes care of children in acute need of refuge." That, along with the fate of the Palestinian boy, might have been uppermost in his mind when he concluded his email with: "I wish my mother knew."

In the end, choosing what words a much-respected friend would approve of is problematic, so I have erred on the side of letting

Børre's own words speak about what mattered to him. I can only think how fortunate we were to have known him and his family, not to mention all the people he connected us to.

From **John Ragland '74**: Let's not forget that long before Facebook was around, Børre created an email list that stitched together a fraternity of scattered, mostly expat ACS alumni. For years we shared memories, talked about philosophy and politics and religion, and closely followed each new war that Lebanon inevitably stumbled into. That email list (I remember it well - hiof.no) gradually faded into disuse as social media took over. It saddened Børre at first, but he eventually surrendered to the inevitable and was a prolific contributor on Facebook. His was a keen and irreverent wit and he was my friend. He is sorely missed.

...all to say that were it not for Børre's work all those years ago, how many of us would be connected today? We are family, in so many ways that others who did not share the ACS experience and the grand adventure of growing up in Lebanon can never understand. We are family, and for that we owe so much to the work and memory of Børre Ludvigsen. Adieu, old friend. You will not be forgotten. For a better overall sense of John Ragland's reaction to Børre's passing, go to levantium.com/2020/04/01/borre-ludvigsen/.

From **Matt Hunt, ACS '70**: I was incredibly fortunate to work with Børre on some of his earliest attempts to bridge the gap between listserves and social media. He and I collaborated on one of the first attempts (mid-1990s) to bring the *Pot* online. It was excruciatingly painful for me to format the raw text and images **Jon Stacey '61** had on his server to HTML that could be rendered on the most popular browsers of the day. But we did it. Half a world apart physically, united by our love of the Levant, ACS, and the community of Third Culture Kids, and a desire to strengthen the bonds between us.

I shed a single tear now realizing that I never met him in person. Godspeed my friend.

In Memoriam

Remembering **Jon Mandaville '55**

Obituary published September 2019 issue.

I just learned about Jon Mandaville's passing last August, a sage voice when discussing the complexities of the Middle East. He was educated as an historian, an Ottomanist. He often came into messy, online altercations to clear up confusions by contributing to the now defunct ACS list.

I last saw him awhile back at a Middle East Studies (MESA) conference in SF. **Børre Ludvigsen '64** was at the conference to talk about Al Mashriq. I had arranged a dinner for ACS alums (about 25 showed) at a North Beach Afghan restaurant, The Helmand.

Monroe Pastermack '53 came as I recall.

Jon's knowledge of the region was deep, subtle, and informed--his comments shed light on foundering discussions. A kind and generous man--a true gentle (not self-important) academic. With Jon's passing and now Børre, key, truly irreplaceable, guiding voices are stilled.

Contributed by **Chris Lund '64**

David Simeon Cook '63 who attended ACS for grades 1-4 (1951-1954) passed away from ALS on March 31, 2020 at the age of 73. David's brother **Alan '64** was one year behind him at ACS. Their mother **Margaret Converse-Cook Fac** taught high school students at ACS. She was the victim of one of the school's more memorable pranks when her students carried her tiny English sports car up the stairs and placed it in the academic building lobby. David's father, Enos Cook, was in Beirut on assignment for ALICO (American Life Insurance Company). Their time at ACS left a deep impression on David. After Beirut the family lived in Venezuela, Jamaica, and Bermuda. He graduated from Fairfield University and earned a J.D. from New York Law School. He practiced litigation and bankruptcy law and worked for two decades in the New York State Office of the Attorney General in the litigation section. He was engaged as a Boy Scout leader in New York. He is survived by his wife Barbara Ann, sons Andrew and Peter and son-in-law Colin Shepherd as well as his brothers Alan, Edward, and Clayton.

Please send communications to Barbara Ann Cook - bwarrenites@aol.com.

Carleton "Mac" MacConnell '66 (1945-2020)

He was called "Mac," which quickly transformed into "Max" before it became "Maxie." When I arrived at ACS in September 1963 as a

junior, Carleton MacConnell had already been there a year. We were both Aramco kids, but he was from Abqaiq. We became great pals for the next two years.

Max was the coolest guy you ever met or ever would have met. He was short, with a body frame like a young Robert DeNiro. He had a chiseled face, dark hair, and a dark goatee, and with his impeccable taste in clothes, he looked Continental in a way no other boys did. In truth, he was already 18 then, and wouldn't graduate ACS until he was 21.

Max was a smooth sax player. He sounded smooth, and he looked even smoother, especially when the girls flocked around him.

My favorite memory of our friendship was that every Sunday morning, we would (legally) check out of the dorm and climb the AUB steps. At the corner of Jeanne D'arc and Rue Hamra was a modern restaurant with a few tables on the sidewalk. From 9:00 am till 11:00, dressed in suits and ties, Max and I would sit having breakfast, reading the International *Herald Tribune*, and sipping Turkish coffee. We did this for most of two years.

After graduation, we lost touch. I went to Boston; he went a year later to George Washington University. Thanks to the ACS Alumni Association, I found Max again in 1988. We got together at least once a year, even after he contracted multiple sclerosis in 1989, and it slowly robbed him of all his abilities. Never once in the last thirty years did I hear him complain about his awful condition. He told me, "Some people think I got a bad deal, but I consider myself so lucky." He credited his good fortune to his brilliant wife, Marilyn, and their wonderful son, Collin. He was lucky, indeed. He died from complications of MS in April 2020.

Contributed by: **Jeffrey Hutchins '65** jeff@jeffhutchins.com



In Memorium Continued

Randal Barnes '74 passed away last month.

Reported by **Leslie Parker '77**



Donna Harms-Hansen '74 and Randy Barnes '74. Photo by Stuart Bingham '74.

Shaun Travis McCage '79 passed away in May 2020.

Shaun was born in Midland, TX in 1960. His family moved frequently during his early years and then moved to Beirut in 1968. After evacuating in 1975, the family later moved to England where Shaun graduated from Lundgren Central High School. After attending Eastern Arizona Community College Shaun joined his family then in Egypt where he worked with an oil exploration crew in the western desert for two years. He then returned to Phoenix for the rest of his life.

Shaun was employed by several local resorts before starting a tree trimming business and trimmed palm trees by donning spikes and climbing up the more than 60-feet with a chainsaw dangling on a rope to use on the fronds. His youthful tree tag escapades on the playground at ACS must have contributed to his chosen profession as an arborist.

Shaun penned many poems that reflected life struggles, moments of joy, and his spiritual journey. Recently some were published in a Flagstaff newsletter to bring awareness to others facing challenges.

He liked playing the drums either on a drum set or rhythmically tapping the dinner table. He remained enthralled with music, owning an extensive collection of vinyl, CDs, and cassettes tapes. Shaun was a lifelong learner and read extensively about nature and science. He was able to solve math problems in his head which served him well set when submitting bids to prospective clients.

He kept in touch with many friends throughout his life including reconnecting with **Don Corsette Fac** when he moved to Arizona. Being able to talk about living overseas and the direction of everyone's life, resonated deeply

Shaun is survived by his parents, Travis and Ann McCage, brother **Raymond '80**, and sister **Monique McCage-Kelly '83** who notes: Shaun read every word of every *Pot* and it became dinner table discussion for weeks following. He missed reading about Don Corsette in the June issue; he would have enjoyed that immensely.

Anne Avantaggio Meyer Fac

Update to March publication provided by **Barbara Meyer '70**:

Anne was also survived by my brother **Peter Meyer '73** who is happily retired from an interesting career, newly remarried, and living in Napier, New Zealand.

Comment by **Sam Constan '53**: I remember her well! She came to Beirut in the forties (maybe 1947) as Anne Avantaggio along with **Ann Boyle Fac**. Avantaggio was my Latin teacher and Boyle taught English. They both were barely older than we were! She married Dr. Meyer who taught at AUB and they lived in the penthouse (5th floor) of the Jurdak building where we lived on the first floor. For those of us, born in Beirut and lived through WWII, we were fascinated with them both because they were so young, hip and "American." Of course as the oil company families arrived ACS became more like schools in the US.

Marilyn Forbes Fac reported by her husband Charles: I am sorry



Karen Hajj '77, Mrs. Marilyn Forbes Fac, and Helen Zughaib '77. Mrs. Forbes was their 3rd grade teacher.

to bring sad news, and certainly wish I could talk to all of you personally instead of having to resort to this impersonal email. But it

In Memorium Continued

does have one advantage: speed.

Marilyn died peacefully in her sleep this morning, Friday, May 1. She had a fall three days ago, but it did not seem to be serious and just caused aches and pains. Marilyn's mobility has been restricted for some time, and she used a walker all the time for the past two years. But she had remained active and happy. She very much enjoyed talking to, corresponding with, and thinking about her many friends who were central to her happiness.

Although it was a shock this morning, I am very thankful that she went peaceful and quickly. It was very much how she hoped her life would end, and I am very thankful for it.

She will be cremated and buried at Star Lake, the one place that our family gathers regularly, and probably will continue to do so over the years. There will be a memorial service at Govans Presbyterian in Baltimore when things return to something close to normal, and we can gather in a group at the church.

Shirley Soghanalian Fac Posted on Facebook by her daughter **Melo Soghanalian-Hansen '77** on July 14: This is my mom. She was a PE teacher from 1956 to 1958 and from 1972 to 1975. She was the head librarian and also helped with the choreography with the roadshow. She met and married my dad during her first go round at ACS then brought my brother and me back to attend ACS from 1969 to 1975. Her favorite part of the job was the students. She loved working with them, she said, because they were so smart and so fun. She passed away today from COVID-19. She loved you all so much.



Newsletter Editor Sought

We are actively looking for an individual or group to take over as editor for the alumni association's quarterly newsletter. A fine-tuned system is in place, with a professional graphic designer and printer we have worked with for many years.

Anyone interested can email:

Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68 lhshep@gmail.com
or **Jay Bruder '74** jabruder4@yahoo.com

Lost Alums

Brenda Cruikshank-Reid '42
Michael Henry '57
Lorne O'Sullivan '68
Thomas Gray '71
Lars Werdelin '72
Lydia Bergent '75

Karen Sternik-Guthman '79
Mona Chammas '99
Tarek Naimne '99
Sophia Roehr '06
Tamour Grahne '07
Celine Smith '18

New Members

Douglas Greene '73
Arlene Warda '78

Joe Gilgan '81
Gail Gallo-Seifert Friend

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ACS Knights



ACS Beirut



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ACS Beirut

Alumni Notes

Charlotte Dennett '65 has written a fascinating book about her effort to learn about her father's death in a plane crash when she was barely six weeks old. I think this is a wonderful read for ACS alumni.

In *The Crash of Flight 3804: A Lost Spy, A Daughter's Quest, and the Deadly Politics of the Great Game for Oil*, Dennett reminds us that politics can be very personal. In her quest to understand the life and death of Daniel Dennett, she found herself plunging into a geopolitical cauldron. This is a remarkable account, both intimate and global in its perspective. Dennett invites us to unravel the mystery of her father's fate as she experienced the "quest" herself over two decades of research. Her father was code named "Carat" by the Central Intelligence Group, the successor to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and precursor to the CIA, for which he worked. Carat (a moniker Dennett uses throughout the book) perished in a mysterious plane "accident" in the mountains of Ethiopia in March 1947. Submitted by **Donald A. Luidens '65**

Doug Greene '73 is a new member who attended ACS Elementary for Kindergarten and part of 1st grade while his father was assigned to the U.S. Embassy. He recently remembered the school and reached out to ask what he could do to help in this time of crisis. Doug stated: "I would be happy to support ACS in any way that can contribute - mentoring students with an interest in diplomatic or regional careers, speaking at events, or assisting with organizational efforts." Doug retired five years ago after 38 years in the U.S. Diplomatic Service. In addition to Washington assignments Doug served in, "Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Morocco, Yugoslavia, and Poland. I was a senior foreign service officer, and in the

UAE and Poland I served as deputy chief of mission and charge d'affaires." Doug is married to Randa Habib, who he met and married while on diplomatic assignment in Beirut from 1981-1983. Doug resides in Falls Church, Virginia.

Helen Zughuib '77 and her husband Andy Zelno at her show "Unfinished Journeys" at the Creative Alliance in Baltimore, Maryland on March 7, 2020.



Arlene Warda '78 is a new member and can be reached at aawarda1@yahoo.com. She writes: I attended 1st and 2nd grade at ACS in 1967-1968. We lived close by the school in a nearby apartment, a high rise.

My dad had an international engineering position at IH, International Harvester, now known as Navistar who had an office in Beirut. He travelled around the Middle East to pipelines in the oil fields: Dubai, Kuwait, and Libya are some of the places he went. My mother, Elaine Warda, was a homemaker, an American and we are from Oak Park, IL.

I'd be interested if you have photos of the school itself or students, or faculty, during the years I attended.

Yasmin Agha '04, AA/ACS Vice President reports: I hope you are all safe and well amidst all the chaos surrounding the Corona virus. It came to my attention

that two of my classmates from the Class of '04, are on the front lines of the fight against Corona in the US.

Both gentlemen are on standby in their respective hospitals, waiting for the influx of Corona patients. I felt so proud of them so could not but share!

Dr. **Abdul Mikati '04** is finishing his neurology fellowship in critical care/ICU at Johns Hopkins.

Dr. **Kamal Shair '04** is based in Florida and is a doctor of Internal Medicine.

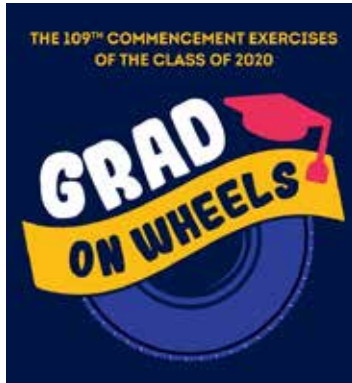
Alex ter Weele Fac (1960s) writes to **Børre Ludvigsen '64** and **Jeff Hutchins '65** as well as other ACS math students of his: The BIG DAY, the 80th anniversary is upon us! May 10, 1940, zero hundred hours Hitler invades The Netherlands! Alex was a kid, his father an officer in the Dutch army defending Holland against the Nazi Panzers. Three days later Holland is overrun, the Dutch surrender to the Germans, and the nightmare begins. The Gestapo chase Alex, his father, mother, and siblings across Europe. Alex's family is on Hitler's dreaded Black List, the 'shoot on sight' list. Alex recounts the story in his best seller "A Family's Flight from Holland During World War Two". Relive this sliver of history; see how this youngster Alex helped save his family and escape the Nazi dragnet. Search for the book by title or by Alex's name. For those still in quarantine from the Covid-19 virus, this is a book that will break the monotony of sitting home alone. And you will learn a bit about a former ACS teacher that you did not know.

Hey Jay: good job on keeping us, the alumni, and ACS faculty informed. The *Pot* is always a good read, far more fun than our university alumni magazines.

Commencement 2020

On the May 30, 2020, the American Community School Beirut held its 109th Commencement Exercises and graduation ceremony, Grad on Wheels, at the ACS campus, celebrating the accomplishments of 91 graduating students in a one-of-a-kind ceremony on wheels!

As the coronavirus pandemic prompted the cancellation of all traditional graduation ceremonies in Lebanon, ACS faced the question of how to honor the years, the connections, and the journey that their senior class had experienced while at ACS. The school created a full month-long campaign highlighting the seniors on social media, building a virtual senior lounge, sending them senior care packages, delivering caps and gowns to their homes, and concluding with a ceremony that captured the attention and filled the hearts of both the seniors and their families.



“Perhaps more than any other graduation in history, our “Grad on Wheels” demonstrates both the innovative spirit at ACS as well as the importance of tradition and connection as we celebrate the end of their time at ACS for our graduates during a tumultuous period in our country and the world,” said ACS Head of School **Greg MacGilpin**. He addressed the graduates by asking them to reflect “on the kindness all people they had encountered in their lives, even during these uncertain times, as it would serve others and help them become more compassionate and balanced in their lives.”

Video: <https://youtu.be/6hDf4W05xh8>

Complete article: <https://www.acs.edu.lb/page.cfm?p=1183&newsid=388>

See photos page 16

2020 AA/ACS Donations Form

- ACS Relief Fund (tax-deductible) \$ _____
- Malcolm Kerr Endowment Fund (tax-deductible) \$ _____
- ACS Emergency Scholarship Fund (tax-deductible) \$ _____
- TOTAL** \$ _____

First Name: _____ Maiden/Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Class Year: _____ Faculty/Staff/Trustee (Please note years): _____
 Email: _____ Phone: _____

Mail checks to: Leonard Smith, AA/ACS Treasurer; 600 Prairie Ridge Rd; Highlands Ranch, CO 80126.
 Make checks payable to “AA/ACS.”

For online donations, access the ACS website: ACS.edu.lb, Giving Page, and use the following links:

- ACS Relief Fund – www.acs.edu.lb/relief
- ACS Emergency Scholarship Fund – www.acs.edu.lb/emergency
- Malcolm Kerr Endowment Fund – www.acs.edu/MKF (located under the Alumni Tab; Give Back)

To make a bank transfer:

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