

the diaspora potrzebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

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A Message from the President

THOUGHTS ON THE BALTIMORE REUNION

I don't know about you all, but I'm still basking in the feeling of the Baltimore Reunion. It was special in so many ways....

It was the first time many of us travelled to a group function post-Covid. That made it even more memorable for me, as well as others.

There were many first-time attendees, and we saw people that we hadn't interacted with since our years at ACS. Also in attendance were faculty members for whom this was their first reunion.

I'm sure we all have our favorite moments, or things that we will always remember. For me, it was an interaction that I had at the cocktail party prior to the Saturday night dinner. I was running around doing things, when a man stopped me, asking "Are you Gina?" He said he had a question for me (something that was said a lot over those 4 days): "Will you go to the Prom with me?". I looked at him and suddenly realized that he had been my date to the Junior Prom. 50 years ago. I had not seen or heard from him since. I doubt that either one of us will forget this sweet reunion. Please enjoy the pictures and memories that Alice has gathered for this edition,

and I would be remiss if I didn't, once again, acknowledge Elizabeth (Betsy) Van Den Berg and her committee for doing such a stellar job in putting this reunion together, in a post-Covid, complicated time.

See you all in 2025!



Gina Kano '73
President AA/ACS



Credit: Mark Barnes '83

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The Diaspora Potrzebie

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THE GREAT CLASS OF '73 50th REUNION

October 20-22, 2023

Embassy Suites Hotel

Charlotte, North Carolina

Please contact acs1973reunion@gmail.com
for additional information.

Message from the Editor

It has taken some time to get this issue together, not least because of the sheer amount of pictures and names to go through. It has been so much fun, though, because every time I see any of the photos, it rekindles the memories that were made at our wonderful ACS Triennial Reunion in Baltimore in August 2022. I personally felt it was a very special one - maybe because of the isolation we have all gone through during "the Covid years", but also in part because of how far we have come in life. It is especially wonderful to see and hug and talk endlessly with old friends, as though no time had passed; as if, as someone special said to me, "the years just fall off our shoulders and we leave them behind."

The lobby of the Lord Baltimore Hotel became our lounge, the coffee shop our Kameel's, our rooms the BD. There was always somewhere to go to meet someone, to talk, to confide, to laugh and to shed tears with. I hope I have been able to convey some of the joy in this issue of the Pot.

Since Christmas is just around the corner, there is a Christmas story from Beirut in this issue. I think we all remember the atmosphere in Ras Beirut at this time of the year. For me, although I now live in the "Winter Wonderland" of Christmastime, the glimpse of lights reflecting on a rainy street, the remembered whiff of chestnuts roasting on hot coals, bundling up against the rain and the wind for a walk along the Corniche to watch the waves roar and crash on the rocks, buying chocolates at Chantilly, Christmas cake at La Brioche - all these things are the real Christmas. How strong and precious those memories of Lebanon are in all of us. One of my very favorite and long-lasting memories connected to ACS is when Bill Blakemore read "A Child's Christmas in Wales" for us at an assembly in the auditorium, just before we all took off for our various homes for the Christmas holidays.

Continued on page 3

Message from the Editor Continued

Because of a lack of tagging in many of the photos received for this issue, and because I don't want to tag some class photos, but not all, there is a list of all the participants by class year attached with this issue - look at it as a kind of Christmas puzzle to play with over the holidays. See if you can find yourself, and recognize others!

I hope I am forgiven for taking so long to get this issue out, but it is a labor of love, and I need you all to keep the stories coming, please!

As always, send them to: alice.ludvigsen@gmail.com

Wishing you all happy holidays, good health and a happy new year,
Alice Ludvigsen '70

PS: Since we can't possibly fit all the wonderful photos people have contributed, there is a Google album where you can see - and share - loads of wonderful memories. Just click on this link. Photos from the reunion: [2022 Reunion](#)

Alumni Notes

Hi All,

I filmed these interviews in Seattle in 2018 at the ACS Class of 1968 50 Year Reunion. It took me a while to finish it, but at the Baltimore Triennial Reunion on August 6 an audience of ACSers saw the the film for the first time.

Though the film is nominally about the Class of '68 I think the things discussed will sound familiar to you all. Enjoy!

Don Maxwell '68

["Magical" on Vimeo.com](#)



Credit: Rob Sivak '68

ACS alumni, classes of '56 and '57, gathered in Southern Maryland from Louisiana, California, New York, Colorado, and suburban Maryland prior to the Baltimore reunion. A Baker's dozen explored the region (Patuxent Naval Air Station, Calvert

Cliffs, Calvert Marine Museum, enjoyed a Bugeye historic vesselcruise on the Chesapeake Bay, and local culinary specialties. Most importantly hours of catching up, conviviality remembering unique experiences, adventures galore, the treasured friends we've lost, the value of the educational experience of ACS, and the hope that our planned West Coast gathering in 2023 will include additional classmates!

Participants were Bill and Nancy Crays, Norman Gray, Ken and Carolyn Lebsock, Judy (Mandeville) and Jim Lipman, Betty Ann (Callaway) Rogers, Bob and Barbara

Sample, Linda (McCarthy) and Jerry Schick.

Carey Overton Randall coordinated and hosted.



Credit: Carey Overton Randall

In Memoriam

The following message was received from Mary Ratcliffe:

My sister, Ann Ratcliffe, taught chemistry and other sciences at ACS from 1968-1972. She died a month ago of dementia. She loved the 4 years she spent in Lebanon and how it opened her world. I'm sending a small contribution to ACS in her memory in the envelope you sent. I'd appreciate it if you would pass on the news of her death to anyone who might have known her.



Ann Elizabeth Ratcliffe, 78, died suddenly at Winter Growth Assisted Living in Columbia, MD, on September 20, 2022.

Ann was born on Christmas night in 1943 in Beckley, WV, the daughter of Edwin and Lanier File Ratcliffe. After graduating from Beckley public schools, she attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, VA, where she earned her bachelor's degree in chemistry. She was president of her sophomore class and active in theater, both on stage and with backstage work, but was often found playing her guitar and singing with friends at the school coffee house. Following graduation, Ann spent one year as a lab technician at Harvard Medical School before embarking on her career as a chemistry educator. She went on to earn a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Duke University while teaching for two years in Danville, VA.

From 1968 to 1972, Ann taught at the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon. She considered these to be the most important formative years of her life, giving her the opportunity to travel extensively in Europe and northern Africa as documented by her outstanding photography skills. In addition to her science teaching, she directed theatrical productions at the school.

After returning to the United States, Ann taught in high schools and then moved to Stillwater, OK. At Oklahoma State University she was a research associate, a lecturer, and coordinator of the general chemistry laboratories. Her duties included disposing of the chemical waste, often noxious, from student labs. This led her to write *Chemistry: The Experience*, a green chemistry lab manual for a first-year class, where one of the goals was to end each investigation/experiment with products that could be put down the drain safely or could be recycled as reactants in another experiment. She was also the author of three editions of the study guide for *The Extraordinary Chemistry of Ordinary Things* by Carl Snyder. While

at Oklahoma State, Ann began taking classes in pottery in order to learn more about the chemical reactions of the glazes during the firing process, but also developed an enduring passion for working with clay at a wheel.

In 1995 Ann moved to Greeley, CO, to manage a high school chemistry curriculum project at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). During the next 15 years she also taught courses in chemistry, physical science, lab and classroom safety, and chemistry teaching methods. Seven of these courses she developed herself. In 2008, she received the Colorado Association of Science Teachers' College Science Award for her outstanding contributions to the teaching of lab safety and green chemistry. She was also nominated that year for the outstanding college science teacher of the year in Colorado. She made dozens of presentations at professional workshops statewide on these issues and published numerous articles in professional journals.

Even on the last day of her life when she quietly harmonized to a song at a Winter Growth singalong, Ann showed her musical talent. She rejected piano lessons, but found her niche as an excellent alto in choruses and as a folk singer, folk guitarist, and autoharpist in the style of Mother Maybelle Carter. Ann and two friends at UNC formed the group, Back Home, performing Celtic and other traditional music at local fairs, parties, and conventions.

If you knew Ann, you had a kind and loyal friend who fought for social justice, gave generously of her time and assets to anyone in need, thought of others before herself, gardened avidly (including herbs for her own stand at the Greeley Farmers' Market), and loved cats - many, many cats.

Ann shared her life for 35 years with her partner, Anna Koester, who died in 2011. She was close to Anna's sons - Kirk, Kerry, and Paul - and especially to Anna's daughter, Kenna, who referred to Ann as her "significant mother". In addition to Anna's children, Ann is survived by her sister, Mary Ratcliffe, of Columbia, MD, and her brother, Edwin Navarro, of San Rafael, CA.

The family suggests that those wishing to honor Ann's life through donation do so to organizations concerned with science literacy, the environment, human rights, or animal rights.

In Memoriam



The iconic photo of Ann Ratcliffe and Kris Katterle from the 1969 yearbook.

We have received the following message from

Donald L. Coppock '65:

My brother and I attended ACS in 1963-1965 while our father was a visiting professor at AUB. My brother just died of cancer and I wanted to have a notice at ACS for all who would be interested. He was highly involved in music even in the 7th and 8th grades, and went on to a professional career in classical music. I have attached an obituary oriented to his time in Beirut. He maintained a life-long interest in the middle east and Lebanon in particular. Our family is very sad about his passing, but we wanted to share with the ACS community the eye opening experience we had in ACS, AUB and 1960s Beirut.

Bruce Coppock '71 - Obituary

Bruce attended the American Community School in Beirut from 1963-65 (7th and 8th grades), during the years his father Joseph Coppock was a visiting professor of economics at AUB. His brother Don graduated from ACS in 1965 and his sister Jane and brother David attended AUB in 1964-65. His mother Esther Coppock was involved with advising international exchange students at AUB. The family loved being in Beirut and his parents returned to AUB from 1974-76. Bruce was involved in the music program at ACS. His interest in the affairs of the Middle East was very strong and he followed them online with a subscription to the Beirut Daily Star for many years.

Bruce's professional career was devoted to music. He received both bachelor and master's degrees from New England Conservatory and worked as a professional cellist in Boston for many years. He was a co-founder and cellist with the Boston Chamber Music Society. In addition, he played with the Boston Symphony, Musica Viva and the Handel and Hayden Society. After an accident in which he injured his left hand, he turned his attention to orchestra management. He served as the Executive Director of the St. Louis Symphony from 1992-98 and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) from 1999-2016. At the SPCO, he revolutionized the way the orchestra was managed, putting the players at the center and engaging a group of artistic partners instead of a permanent conductor. In both St. Louis and St. Paul, he found new and imaginative ways to engage the community and bring new audiences to classical music. In 2016 returned to the Boston area to continue as a teacher and performer.

In 2006, Bruce was diagnosed with bile duct cancer. He managed to survive for 16 more years through the blessings of good medical care, great support from his wife, Lucia, his two children and his sister and brothers, as well as his own strong commitment to continuing his work. He will be remembered with great love by his wide circle of friends, family, students, and colleagues.

Galan Errol Leeman '55 - Obituary

April 25, 1947 - September 8, 2022

Survived by his wife, Carol, and children Kenneth and Christine, their spouses and children, and his sister Mary Lou Hibbard.

Galan attended Montana Zugerberg, Switzerland, prior to the American Community School, Beirut, Lebanon. Following graduation, Michigan State University, University of California at San Luis Obispo, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, graduated Florida Southern December 1984.

US Army 1962, Ft Ord, Calif, Karlsruhe, Germany, discharged 1968.

Retired in 1999, VP Prestess Supply, Lakeland FL, marketing firm for prestress concrete industry.

Ordained in November 2000 as Priest, served parishes Immanuel and Ascension in Florida. Chaplain in The Order of St. Luke the Physician.

Baltimore Reunion - August 4-7, 2022

HOW WE MADE THAT HAPPEN:

ACS Baltimore Reunion Committee Report

It had its seeds years ago after the 2nd Washington DC reunion. Jay Bruder '74 was the then reunion chair, and I worked on the committee. At the end of the event, people were bouncing around ideas, and I thought – why not Baltimore?

It wasn't the right time – we needed to go west. When it was time to move east again, Boston was a better fit (2016). Salt Lake City (2019) seemed questionable to many, but gee, folks, it was GREAT.

Baltimore was back on the table, but there was a “wait and see if maybe Chicago?? Or Texas??”

And then there was this pandemic....

It seemed as if a reunion might be possible in 2022, so with Jay Bruder's urging, I tentatively began to put my toe in the water and research hotels in the Inner Harbor area. My long list narrowed quickly with costs too high, unresponsive sales folk, inadequate meeting room or ballroom space, but I was hopeful, and landed on the Lord Baltimore(LB). I loved her history, the ghost stories, the unique designs, accessibility to Inner Harbor activities, proximity to the light rail and access to BWI airport. A second hotel as a backup, and I worked a deal with LB to do a virtual tour, and to ensure that if the hotel were not ready for us by xx date they would help us secure another venue for our event.

Our intrepid committee began to form up via ZOOM meetings in July. We built a solid core of people –

Jay Bruder '74

Donna Harms Hansen '74

Mug Kelberer '73

Jeanie Mullin '73

Delinda Curtiss Hanley '73

Philip Davies '67

Janet Catalan Knoblauch '73

Noreen O'Donnell '73

George Miller '77

Anne Seidel Overington '77

Carolyn Buerskens

Isabelle Buckley '79

Ramsey Taweel '74

I loved getting to know these folks, some of them for the first time, others more deeply. As with most of my ACS peeps, I felt I could reach out and get a response asap, but all of these committee members did step up, even last minute. I got a lot of accolades, but truly they did a lion's share of the work.

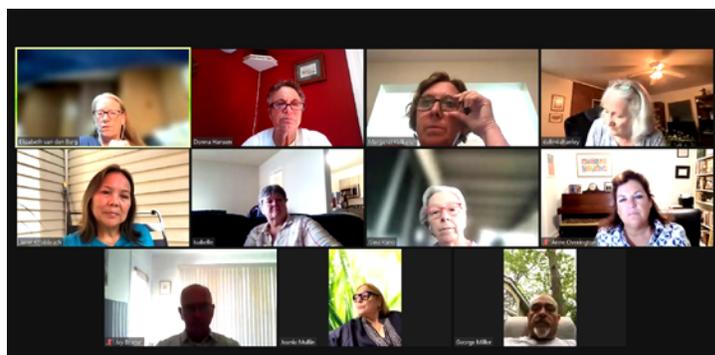
I hope if you've read this through, that you will consider hosting a reunion near you, or afar. It helps to have one or two locals, but most of the work can be remote. Dare I say....I'd do it again remotely, depending on location and availability of ACS'ers to pitch in.

What do we need?

Someone to host and a committee to support. (Several of us have already volunteered.) Younger alums to get on board – organize a reunion overseas? We oldies would go! Let's continue to share our stories – When, not If..., Fill the Bathtub..., Baltimore or Bust...

You decide what's next!

Elizabeth van den Berg '74



Typical Reunion Committee Zoom meeting. Credit: Donna Hansen '74



Betsy and Donna of the Reunion Committee. Credit: Barbara Porter

Baltimore Reunion - August 4-7, 2022 Continued

Since we can't possibly fit all the wonderful photos people have contributed, there is a website where you can see - and share - loads of wonderful memories:

Photos from the reunion: [2022 Reunion](#)

Impressions from first-time attendees, who only attended ACS for one year:

Dorothy Howard '72:



*Hi, Dorothy!
I'm getting ready to get a new issue of The Pot out, and it will have lots of reunion stuff, of course. I seem to remember that when we met in Baltimore, you mentioned this was your first reunion, and that you had only been at ACS for one year - but that the connection was strong*

anyway. Am I right, or am I remembering it all wrong? If it IS the case, do you think you could send me a sentence or three about that experience?

Best wishes from Alice Ludvigsen '70

You are right, except I did go to the Glen Grubbs reunion in '21. I went into theatre because of the encouragement of Mr. Pellett from ACS. The influence ACS had on me sent me from being a marginal high school student to being an Honors student in college. My year in the Middle East, and especially Beirut, has influenced me from the way I eat to the way I dance! I feel such a connection to everyone I've met from ACS. It was a year not many people get to experience. I am SO lucky to have that!

*Thank you!
Which year was it?
And what was your impression of the*



**Dorothy, "Miss Foose", and Meredith Reynolds.
Credit: ACS REunion Committee**

Baltimore reunion?

How/who did you stay in touch with from that year?

I was there during the 1970-71 school year. I left because of the death of my father. It was hurried, and I'm not sure if addresses were exchanged. I know it took over a year to get school records from ACS. A couple of years ago, my sister went down the infamous rabbit hole and made contact with Glen Grubbs. Thank God she did.

The Baltimore reunion was marvelous! I had such a good time.

How wonderful!! And very sad, your reason for leaving.

So 70-71 was the year after I had left. So, were you a senior that year? And how about your sister?

So glad you found Glen!!

I was a junior. My sister was in 3rd grade in jeddah. She should be at Glen's next year.

Kathy Karjawally Abdul-baki, class of 1969 and first-time reunion attendee:



ACS Reunion in Baltimore, 2022

Through sheer serendipity, my new friend Jane McKinley, an ACS alumnus, informed me of the tri-annual ACS reunions and encouraged me to attend my first one in Baltimore this past August. Many thanks to Jane for enabling me to have this extraordinary experience!

It was nothing short of surreal to meet up again with classmates I hadn't seen in over 50 years when we strode across AUB chapel's stage to receive our diplomas. Having attended several different high schools, and ACS for only my senior year, I'd assumed that graduation day in 1969 would (sadly) be the last I'd see of my classmates once we dispersed for universities and myriad unknown futures.

Reconnecting this past August with friends and fellow students after so long was akin to meeting a group of amazing, accomplished, and affable strangers. A lifetime had passed since graduation, yet decades dissolved as we bonded through our shared history and love for ACS and the Middle East. Our faces, now minus the baby fat of yearbook photos, radiated something deeper and more beautiful—a humble warmth and caring for

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Baltimore Reunion - August 4-7, 2022 Continued

each other through our school memories and that magical time in Beirut.

I loved seeing the few people with whom I'd had classes (ever-thoughtful senior class president Philip Brown, Christine Weir Abbyad, Rodion Rathbone, Bob Royce and Alice Ludvigsen) and others I knew as fellow seniors (Homecoming Queen Donna Barnsley, whose smile could sail a thousand ships, class vice president Sharon Vaissiere, yearbook editor Glenn Hughes, Peter Sonne, Cliff Barnard, Ted Seto, Rodion Rathbone, and Dan Swenson—that playful glint in Dan's eyes unmistakable.) It was also a pleasure to meet alumni who had graduated both before and after me, and those who'd worked in the administration, such as impressive master sailor Fadwa Ghannoum.

Some of us discovered common experiences—Dan Swenson and his wife, Kathy, had lived in Bahrain shortly after my husband and I had in the late '70s. A special highlight for me was meeting up with my friend and next door neighbor in Kuwait, Bob Royce. He's perhaps the only person with whom I can share memories of our idyllic childhood on the sea in our desert compound of Mina Abdullah, and of our parents, siblings, and even of our beloved pets.

Flashes of the incredible plays put on that senior year by Frank Ford and Bill Blakemore, "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown," and "Noah," came back as I chatted with the talented and brilliant stars, Ted Seto and Rodion Rathbone; Rodion and I recalled our class reading Yeats and King Lear in Bill Blakemore's whimsical garden; and the final night's dinner and dancing was reminiscent of Senior Prom (echoes of "Knights in White Satin.") A special thanks to Peter Sonne for the fun reunion dances!

It struck me how little I'd known about some of my ACS classmates' backgrounds. I knew the parents of some were diplomats, while others were employed by overseas companies, oil and otherwise, in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. I now learned of those who'd lived in Beirut a long time, who'd been born in Lebanon and spoke Arabic, and several whose parents were missionaries. In that exhilarating and all-too-brief senior year taken up with college applications and the intense pressure of class work (Bill Blakemore cheered us on as we epically completed a book of poetry and a novel for his English class), I hadn't thought much about my classmates' lives outside of school. I was now fascinated to learn of their varied backgrounds



Peter Sonne, Rob Royce and Ted Seto
Credit: ACS Reunion Committee



Donna Barnsley, Craig Troeller, Kathy Karjowally and Bob Foster.
Credit: Craig Troeller

Baltimore Reunion - August 4-7, 2022 Continued

and wished my teenage self had been more curious to do so at the time.

The image I'll cherish most, though, is of the inspiring, unstoppable Bill Blakemore on the dance floor for several hours, his students dancing with and around him, the palpable love flowing between all. What a gift!

If there's truth to the proverb "You can't go home again," it was nowhere in evidence that weekend in Baltimore. If only I didn't have to wait another three years for a repeat! Meanwhile, be well all, and Ila al Liqaa'.

A letter from one of the reunion attendees to one (plus some) of those who couldn't make it to Baltimore:

September 8, 2022

Hi Debbie,
Obviously, I've been meaning to write this since the reunion. Duh. Such a procrastinator. Although I know I can say absolutely anything to you without fear of repercussions, I may sanitize this letter a bit, and add some small explanations for other people who have a general interest yet were unable to attend. Hilary and Kim Henry come to mind, Sally Gowing, Pat Worthington, Liz Brown, Mary Kelberer, Roy Fowler, Lynne Moukerezzi Harstedt, etc.

Barbara Porter and her sister Joan were both there. They had a blast! Richie Porter was there, too. Joan is married and lives in England. Barbara recently moved to DC after years in Amman. She now conducts tours, I think, for groups that travel to Jordan, which is where she made her mark over the years in charge of an important historical entity. Important stuff. We watched her on TV at Marke Baker and Maureen Beurskens' house once.

Geoff Braun was there. Class of 68, cool guy. His Dad, Garwood Braun was a big wheel at ACS when I was a freshman, and he later worked with my Dad at Raytheon (Gar, not Geoff).

Rosie Muhanna, an ACS Administrator, was there, and she is a great gal. I have been dealing with her regarding the Class of 71 donation to the school, which BTW totaled \$28,000 (thanks to Kevin Handly, et al)! She and my buddy Robert Reeves had a few drinks Friday night and were quite celebratory out on the sidewalk in front of the Hotel. To the point of hilarity.

Bob Foster was there, looking spry and having an excellent time. He is one of the more popular teachers. Hung around a lot with Craig Troeller, as Craig has been living at Bob's house for a while. They are buddies. It was nice to catch up with Craig, as that Class of '69 was a favorite of mine.

Tom Cangiano, Head of School, was in a few meetings I attended, as I am soon to be on the Alumni Board (Thank You, Jeff Hutchins). Tom has a lot on his plate. There is no more boarding department. The Boys BD rooms are used as classrooms. The places like Jeddah and Dhahran, etc. that used to send students, now have their own American High Schools. The Lebanese currency and government are in shambles. Yikes!

Yes, the Schaub's were there. Such nice people and they have a slew of friends.

One of my favorite teachers was there, Sindy Foose. She is now Sara Parrott and she and her husband attend my reunions, too, as they summer in NH. Very cool people.

A BIG bunch of Alumni were there from the 50s and early to mid 60s. Pretty special. I'm 68 years old and some of these folks attended ACS when I was born!

Paul and Jo Parks Wunderlich attended. Jo is a woman, Paul's wife. They also come to my reunions, and they donated \$500 on behalf of the late Herb Wunderlich to the Class of '71 ACS gift. Remarkably they attended years before I did, and their siblings were both in my class and friends of mine. Susie Parks (Jo's sister), Sally Gowing and I were real buddies my freshman year, Susie in Jeddah too. And, of course, the late Herb Wunderlich was our Class President my senior year, 1971. A very nice fellow, good athlete, and a friend from Jeddah.

Class of '68 was well represented. Alan Akers was there. Super guy, BMOC my freshman year. And Barbara Muller has not aged (neither has Nancy). Don Maxwell was super cool and dapper. Jan Sibley, Becky's older sister looked great! Neil Dale and Barb Muller did a lot of dancing with Bill Blakemore on the dance floor as he has Parkinson's and needed assistance. He was game, though, for a good time and but never seemed to tire! Pam Wagner was there, seemed well and had fun. And of course, the very dapper Tom Najemy and his pretty wife Sarah Brooks were there, as was Mary Najemy.

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Baltimore Reunion - August 4-7, 2022 Continued

Cliff Barnard '69 was there with his lovely wife Becky Sibley '70, who was SO HAPPY to hang with Alice Ludvigsen '70 you could feel it. LOL. They were roomies at ACS. The amazing Donna Barnsley was there, BUT I MISSED HER. I have no idea how it happened. We have spoken by text since then, but I am still heartbroken. She has always been one of my favorite ACSers since I attended HER Prom in 1969 (THE QUEEN). I saw the friendly Danny Swenson '69. Glenn Hughes '69, whose wife Shelley Seiberling '71 recently passed, seems to have found a new friend in Mary Harstedt '70, (Jeff and the late Jimmy's older sister). A total of sixteen people from the Class of '69. Wow!

It's possible that NO ONE has more fun at reunions than Leslie Jones!! I have already spoken of the Porter girls, Bourbon Killgore is a newcomer to the Reunions, but she is waaaay cool. Her sister Jane from Class of '68 couldn't attend as her husband had recently taken ill. The people I see a lot are Cindy O'Leary, Gina, Leslie, Hardee, Mi, Ron (lately), Sandy, Thelma, and Julie Johns. But, whatever, my dream came true; I spent 14 hours in the back seat of my SUV with Julie!! OK, tasteless joke, but she thought it was funny. Truth is, my wife and I picked up Sandy Smith Bickford and Julie and drove them to the reunion and back home. Sandy navigated for Deb, and Julie and I chatted in the back seat forever. A lot of gossip, some not fit for the public. The ageless Thelma's husband Paul, who sometimes attends MY reunions, was diagnosed with cancer in February. He was declared cancer free by July. The miracle of modern medicine. Mike Blevins danced every single dance I think. He is new to these reunions but I doubt he'll ever miss another one!

Hilary (Henry-Neff), I don't know as much about Class of '72, (or '73 or '74 for that matter). But I'll try. Lots of attendees: Cathy Pearson Beyer, Cynthia Fetterolf Davidson, Dorothy Howard, JoAnn Atwood, Lars Werdelin, Maggie Emblom-Callahan, Mark Lathrop, Martha Garman, Mary Najemy Fathallah, Paige Gayuski, Sarah Brooks Najemy, Susan Weir. Cindy Fetterolf Davidson is a friend from Jeddah, and she and her hubby Malcolm come to my reunions. Super people. Dorothy Howard is a newbie to FB who also now comes to my reunions. I think she arrived after you left, Debbie and Hil. Jay Moore couldn't make it, family emergency, although Kathy was there. JoAnn Atwood was a blast as always; hung around with Mary Najemy, Paige I see all the time, Sarah Brooks is still gorgeous, I don't think I saw Sue Weir. Mark Lathrop and his wife lovely Kit had a bunch of fun and tripped the light fantastic. As a matter of fact, we ALL danced ALL evening till they threw us out at 10 pm. Oldies,

dancing to the oldies!!

Under-under classmen, Cat Essoyan and her hubby René Hopen were there of course. Cat will be joining me and Evelyn Lambert Saunders on the Alumni Board in January. Jeannie Mullin had a LOT of fun, as did Gina Kano, who heads the Alumni Board. Mug Kelberer was there, of course. Marke Baker and Maureen Beurskens are unflappable. Loving, kind, generous, and great friends. Same can be said for Pete and Gina Canarela. It's why Deb and I hang out with them!

OK. This is as much as I've typed since I retired. And it's all right handed, as my left hand is halfway inoperable.

Debbie, Much Love To You. Glen



L-R: Maureen Beurskens '73, Marke Baker '73, Gina Canarela '71, Glenn Grubbs '71, Pete Canarela '73, Debra Grubbs. Credit: Robert Reeves '70

Photo Album - Baltimore Reunion, 4-7 August, 2022

Class Photos:



Classes of 1953-1958
Credit: Robert Reeves



Classes of 1962-1966
Credit: Reunion Committee



Class of 1967
Credit: Reunion Committee



Class of 1968
Credit: Reunion Committee



Class of 1969
Credit: Reunion Committee



Class of 1970
Credit: Reunion Committee

Photo Album - Baltimore Reunion, 4-7 August, 2022

Class Photos:



Class of 1971
Credit: Barbara Porter



Class of 1972
Credit: Barbara Porter



Class of 1973
Credit: Barbara Porter



Class of 1974
Credit: Barbara Porter



Class of 1975
Credit: Reunion Committee



Class of 1976
Credit: Barbara Porter

Photo Album - Baltimore Reunion, 4-7 August, 2022

Class Photos:



Class of 1977
Credit: Reunion Committee



Class of 1978
Credit: Reunion Committee



Class of 1979
Credit: Barbara Porter



Class of 1983
Credit: Barbara Porter

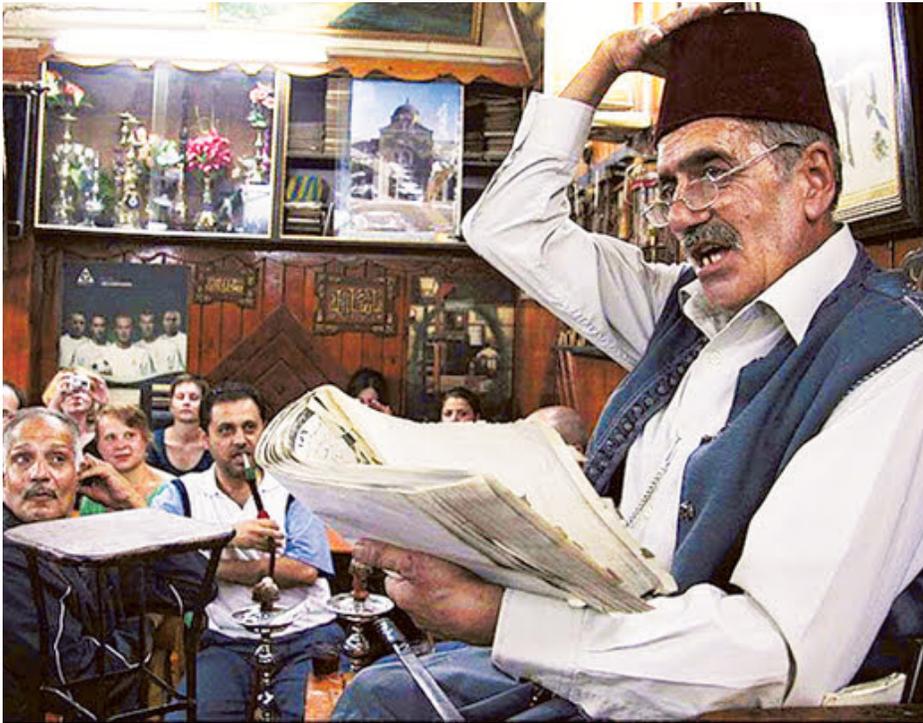


Faculty and Administration of ACS, Beirut
Credit: Barbara Porter

**Cross check
your class photo
with the List of
Participants
included in
this issue.**

Photo Album - Baltimore Reunion, 4-7 August, 2022

General photos from the coffee shop (Kameel's), the lobby (the lounge),
General Meeting (Assembly), Saturday Night dancing (Beit Ahwi), etc.



Not exactly the hakawati café in Damascus, but pretty close: Bob Foster telling stories in the Lord Baltimore coffee shop.
Credit: Stock photo/Alice Ludvigsen



Rodion Rathbone checking in.
Credit: Reunion Committee



The place to meet and greet!
Credit: Reunion Committee

Photo Album - Baltimore Reunion, 4-7 August, 2022

General photos from the coffee shop (Kameel's), the lobby (the lounge),
General Meeting (Assembly), Saturday Night dancing (Beit Ahwi), etc.



Fadwa Ghannoum and Tom Cangiano.
Credit: Alice Ludvigsen



Alice Ludvigsen and Sara Foose Parrott
Credit: Alice Ludvigsen



The Hospitality Desk moves upstairs to follow the crowd.
Credit: Richard Hanna



John Seker and Helen Zughuib
Credit: Helen Zughuib



Friday night fun with the ACS choir.
Credit: Jeff Hutchins



The four McKinley sisters, L-R: Mardy, Judy, Mary and Jane.
Credit: Jeff Hutchins

Photo Album - Baltimore Reunion, 4-7 August, 2022

General photos from the coffee shop (Kameel's), the lobby (the lounge),
General Meeting (Assembly), Saturday Night dancing (Beit Ahwi), etc.



Gina Kano and Sara Foose Parrott demonstrate belly-dancing. Credit: Reunion Committee



General mood in the lobby on the last morning of the reunion. Goodbye, till the next time! Credit: Alice Ludvigsen



Bill Blakemore dances with Nancy and Barbara Muller. Neil Dale in the background. Credit: Robert Reeves

Reflections on a Visit to Lebanon, November 2022

I spent a week in Lebanon in early November 2022. My last visit there was in 2018 when I went with my husband René Hopen (ACS 1973) and son, and our visit coincided there with those of ACS alumni Noreen O'Donnell '73 and Alice Ludvigsen '70, and we visited our classmate Anne Fawaz '73 in her village, Deir Mimas, in the south. I lived in Lebanon from 1965 to 1973 and I traveled there quite regularly while I was working on the MENA region for Oxfam Novib from 1992 to 2021. I retired in spring of 2021 and this time I travelled to Lebanon as a Board Member for the UK and Belgium Boards of the Near East Foundation to attend a meeting and to take part in field visits to Saida and in Beirut with local partner organisations SHEILD and Arcenciel. I added a few days onto my trip for myself. I stayed at the Mayflower Hotel in Hamra and took long walks to visit parts of Beirut I remember from my high school years and from more recent visits. I shared a lot of photos of what I encountered on Facebook and was touched by the overwhelmingly warm reception they received from so many ACSers, who share my deep sense of connection to Lebanon.

Lebanon was in a desperately difficult state at the time I visited, suffering an economic collapse and financial crisis, coupled with the repercussions of the Beirut blast and the government's failure to be held accountable. The president resigned at the end of his six year term the day before I arrived and the expectation was it would take at least seven months before agreement could be reached on his successor. There was a huge discrepancy in exchange rates



A manouchi in the courtyard! Credit: Cat Essoyan '73

between the official rate of LL 1500 to the dollar and the black market rate of around LL37,000. This meant that a teacher who used to make the equivalent of \$4000 a month now makes about \$300 and a policeman who used to make \$1000 a month now makes the equivalent of \$70 and has to take on a second or third job to survive. There are beggars on the street but there is a lot of invisible poverty, people in their homes struggling to manage. I was told the middle class in effect no longer exists. Many people have lost their savings in Lebanese banks as they are not able to access their funds. There are striking inequalities: if one's salary is dollarized one can afford to go out, if not, one struggles to cope. The Hamra

Reflections on a Visit to Lebanon, November 2022 Continued

area feels beaten down, with a number of shops closed, and the roar of diesel generators which are polluting the air. I saw many lines of people waiting outside banks, big trucks delivering water to buildings. On the other hand, in the Gemmayze area, there are many restaurants doing well and the night life is vibrant. Electricity and gas are in short supply and very expensive.

I heard that many people who could afford to were leaving the country, as was the case during the civil war. In general people felt this is the worst crisis the country has faced. I asked people if they felt Lebanon could yet again recover. A number were quite doubtful. Some bristled when I mentioned the fabled resilience of the Lebanese people. Others said if only the currency could stabilize, the country could indeed move forward. One cited the proverb that if you throw a cat in the air, it always lands on four feet. There were encouraging rumors that some investment in Lebanon was starting again. I was told that Hezbollah had reduced its level of readiness for conflict in the wake of the maritime oil exploration agreement with Israel. One person said it was good that this economic crisis was happening as the previous governance system was bankrupt, with the government subsidizing medicine and fuel and going heavily into debt, which was not sustainable. The system was broken and needed to be fixed. I was told that the money in banks was no longer there and had been stolen, moved to foreign banks out of reach of the account holders. It was expected that many banks would not survive the present crisis.

On the personal level, it was very special for me to be in Lebanon at this time. I visited ACS and was shown around by Rosie Muhanna, who manages development and alumni relations. A lot of the school has been transformed, with a new science floor on the lower level of the main building and a nursery

and new playground in what was once the BD (and is still called the BD although there is no longer a boarding department.) The courtyard with the tree in the middle of it is thankfully still there. Rosie told me all old alumni want to have their picture taken with it and I was no exception to the rule. I had a good conversation with Tom Cangiano, the head of school, who has a strong commitment



Rosie Muhanna with one of the teachers at ACS. Credit: Cat Essoyan '73

to ACS and is actively engaged in navigating its course forward in the difficult present circumstances. I visited the AUB campus to meet with a friend from my Oxfam days. It remains a beautiful haven in the Hamra area, overlooking the Mediterranean. I walked to Raouche where we used to live. I met a friend of René's from his childhood in Saida and we had a lovely Lebanese lunch overlooking Pigeon Rocks. I walked through Ain Mreisseh and along the Corniche, past the skeleton of St George's hotel and the newly reopened Phoenicia, over to Riad el Solh square, the Beirut Souks which now house up-market stores, and to the Mohammed Al Amin mosque. I went to a multimedia exhibition called "Allo Beirut" in the Beit Beirut center. It used video and audio clips to recall the history of the city from the 1960's through the civil war. I found it effective and quite moving. It was also a treat for me to visit Saida's souqs on one of our field visits, and to revisit the Saida castle on the coast. Despite the current day challenges, Lebanon remains such a beautiful country and I really hope that it and its people will once again prevail.



With a childhood friend of René's, who happens to be Rosie's dad. Credit: Cat Essoyan '73

Christmas in Beirut

By Patricia Falconer Roland '75

My brother, Billy, and I sat at the dining room table in Beirut, making trimmings for the Christmas tree: we cut construction paper in strips, cello-taped them into circles, and made paper chains. All very austere, this was our humble substitute for the fancier, stateside decorations.

Our mom entered the living/dining room, took one look at the tree with its embellishments thus far, and blurted out, "Why can't we ever have anything nice around here?" I guess the holidays were stressing her out.

After a year or so, in 1965, our family settled into an apartment just off Rue Abdul Aziz, and this flat was a little more comfortable than the two previous ones. We received our Christmas decorations and ornaments from California, and were able to put on a holiday more like those we had been used to in the United States.

We ascribed to the tradition where each one of us selected our own ornaments every year, so that my brother and I had ones dating from our first birthdays, onward. My first selection: a blue-green globe decorated with shooting stars.

Billy and I spent happy moments sitting before the illuminated Christmas tree. We played a game in which we took turns thinking of a particular ornament, and the other one asked a series of questions, until he or she was able to pin down the decoration being visualized.

As far as the city outside our apartment was concerned, it was Rue Al Hamra that constituted one of Beirut's hubs of activity, and this was heightened on nights during the holidays: the Mercedes service taxis stood bumper to bumper, with drivers screaming at the pedestrians, who dodged between the cars, all of them yelling back and forth. Families shopping. Flashing movie marquées. Lampposts decorated with oversized red ribbons and gold bells.

How tantalizing, the mixed odor of popcorn, garlic, za'atar, exhaust, and roasted chestnuts, sold by a young Nigerian man, his cicatrized face lit up by embers glowing in the brazier.

But for me, it was largely in and around Rue Jeanne d'Arc, Abdul Aziz, and Rue Bliss where Christmas seemed to spring up, make itself known.

Colored lights had been strung across the windows of bookstores and stationery stores that featured the latest titles, the fanciest cards, meant to draw you in for holiday shopping.

Shoe stores and sporting-goods stores displayed potential presents

in the glass footlockers that underscored store windows. I fancied the Batta (Lebanese brand) low white-leather boots with sheepskin round the top.

The pâtisseries in town specialized in making Bûche de Noel at this time of year, particularly at Tyrol on Rue Chouran. The outside of the store was draped in white lights, and the window presented a miniature Swiss village, surrounded by small trees dusted with imitation snow.

Chantilly confectioners on Jeanne d'Arc laid out trays of festive chocolates and candies in the windows, such as painted marzipan in fruit shapes, and these evoked the coming holidays.

Our family's visit to Michel Habré's sports store heralded the beginning of the season. Traditionally, we went there seeking rental skis matched with their bamboo poles. We knew his store from the times we had purchased gymnastic slippers and leotards, swim fins, and tennis gear, mostly for us kids. His shop was the best outfitted for this kind of stuff.

We would usually ski at Faraya or Laklouk, both substantially closer to Beirut than the Cedars of Lebanon. At Laklouk, we spent the majority of the day skiing the designated slopes. Then, in the late afternoon, my dad, Billy, and I would leave the proper ski area and continue skiing down the mountain, alongside the road, with my mom in the taxi, following our progress slowly. We kept on going until we got to the point where the snow had all but melted away...or dusk fell, whichever came first.

On a rainy night, the family dined at an Italian ristorante in Ras Beirut, near our Mekawi Building apartment. Colored candles flickered in basketry-covered Chianti bottles. We finished dinner with a holiday treat: pale-yellow spumoni, with its gems of green, red, and gold candied fruit.

I did think that Yuletide in Beirut was important, something special, spiritual. I mean, we now lived in The Holy Land, the Land of Milk & Honey, where Jesus and his disciples actually walked in Tyre, South Lebanon!

Amidst all these festivities, perhaps the times that meant the most to me were the weekends leading up to the holiday, singing in the Sunday choir at the Community Church on Rue M. Barres.

At ACS, a seasonal highlight consisted of singing in the Adesté choir of six or eight students, all of us walking down the center aisle of the auditorium to the stage during the annual Christmas Pageant, wearing the robes lent us by the Community Church: white cotton with Peter-Pan collars and maroon yokes. This production was the

Christmas in Beirut Continued

brainchild of fourth-grade teacher Rose Churchill. We grammar-school students made the Pageant's programs out of construction paper: a plain, green, cut-out Christmas tree on a red field, just like the Xmas cards that Charlie Brown and his friends made.

One year, the larger, elementary-school choir, wearing those same robes, sang at the local radio station in South Beirut, where we were filmed and presented in real time, on local TV. It was not okay to mention certain words. So when we got to the part of "Adeste Fidelis" that alluded to Bethlehem, we had to hum through that part. Same with our rendition of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," in which we had to replace occurrences of the word Israel. For example, we sang, "...and ransom captive, mmm m mm."

Up on Al Hamra, the ABC mercantile store stood on one of the street corners. ABC was the place to buy Yuletide ornaments, which took over the front of the venue, especially the red-and-white-painted glass mushrooms and bright birds with bristled tails, both decorations meant to be clipped onto the branches of one's holiday tree. Corsages with sugar bells. Plastic holly wreaths with berries, tied up in red bows.

At Toyland, I shopped for gifts I might give to my brother—and dreamed of the ones I might receive, like a Troll doll or a particular stuffed animal. Wishing.

The small department store, Fontana, on Abdul Aziz, stood behind our apartment building. My brother and I went there with my dad, to find presents for Mom. She was pretty easy to buy for: candy, flowers, household goods.

Dad presented more of a challenge. When we shopped at Fontana, I sneaked into the basement cavern that was decorated with tragedy and comedy masks, looking for the odd goofy present for him, a lot of them having to do with monkeys, for some reason.

But Dad, always one step ahead of the game, requested of me 365 smiles a year. Subsequently, I produced 365 disks the size of an Oreo cookie, cut out of mint-green tissue paper, each one decorated with a smile-face in red magic marker, put them in an envelope, and that was my present! Boy, was he flummoxed!

When my family went to California and spent time visiting friends and extended family, in the early days of summer, our parents shopped for the latest stateside toys, and these arrived in Beirut some months later. With each passing year, this delivery of a shipment from the United States became increasingly important, until it overshadowed the holiday landscape, despite the fact that it arrived in August.

"Santa" placed the fancy American gifts around a potted plastic rubber tree, situated in the no-man's-land between living and dining rooms.

And so, the real Christmas was now eclipsed by this other, fake, manufactured holiday that occurred off-season. My brother and I were certainly privileged to receive all these state-of-the-art toys over the years, and, no doubt about it, they were swell:

Mouse-trap game, Crazy Clock, Vac-U Form, Creepy Crawlers, Incredible Edibles, Spin Art, Barbie Doll furniture, to upholster and assemble yourself, oversized puppets that talked when you pulled a string, like green-headed Frankenstein, and white-terry-cloth-covered Casper the Friendly Ghost...All kinds of neat stuff!

But these games and toys were so transient. We'd receive them one year; and the next, they magically disappeared. Our mom gave them all away to The Women's Auxiliary without even telling us, much less asking us if it was okay...no matter if we liked them or not! Easy come, easy go, I guess.

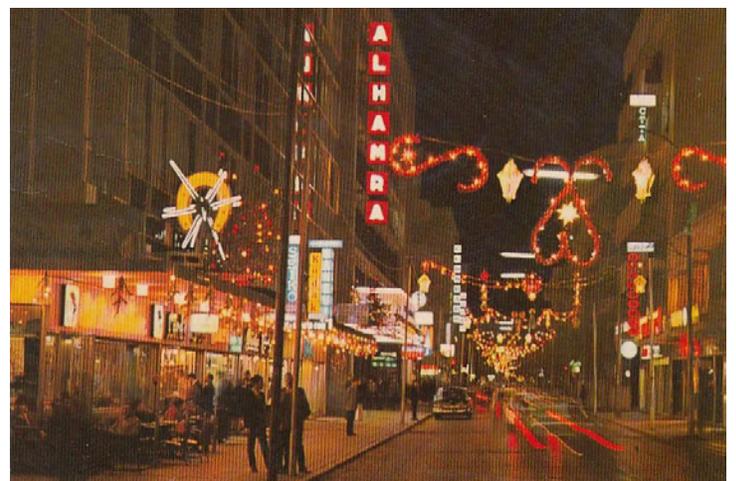
I did struggle with this excess, which, instead of honoring the holiday, seemed to take it down a peg or two. What happened to the essential meaning, the core of Yuletide?

Any magical or spiritual part of the season was essentially bled out of the actual calendar holiday, thrown away like yesterday's newspaper, and replaced by this super-materialistic array of current, happening stateside toys.

In December, my brother and I came away with the message, "Christmas isn't really happening right now," so we should all but ignore it for the next half year, in favor of a phony, plastic kind of Xmas that proved to be oh so ephemeral.

Well, at least some other kids got the fancy toys...

I felt then, as I do now, that maybe it was time for people to watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" again.



Credit: oldbeirut.com

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