

the diaspora potrzebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

Volume XXXII Number 1

Our 42nd year of publication

March 2020

Reunion 2022

Host the Next ACS Reunion in the US in 2022!

Every third year the Alumni Association of ACS (AA/ACS) sponsors a school-wide reunion in the United States. In 2019, we met up in Salt Lake City; the feedback was positive, and the attendance exceeded our expectations. The Alumni Council of the Alumni Association would welcome proposals from any group interested in hosting the next reunion.

Proposals should be submitted by May 15, 2020. Remembering the goal of the reunion is to bring as many ACSers together as possible while keeping it as affordable for as many alums as possible, here is what we generally look for in a reunion proposal:

Volunteers: A local reunion committee with a chairperson, a treasurer, and few more key volunteers to ensure we have a core group that can follow the project through to completion.

Location: An attractive and reasonably priced hotel in or near an urban area with access to a regional, national, or international airport. The hotel should be able to accommodate 300-500 people for a sit-down banquet, offer a hospitality suite included with a group contract, and have meeting rooms for programmed events, Alumni Council, and business meetings.

Date: Reunions have tended to default to the 4th of July weekend for reasons of lower cost and improved hotel availability, but that date is not mandatory and the local committee may propose other dates. In fact, SLC took place in August.

Program of events: The local reunion committee has the lead here and is given a great deal of flexibility to plan what they want. A Saturday night banquet and a Saturday morning business meeting have become standard because more people from the local area will show up on Saturday. AA/ACS council meetings will also be scheduled. Lately, there have been "talent nights" and Choir performances added to the agenda; but this would be up to the reunion committee to schedule.

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The Diaspora Potrzebie

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All correspondence should be sent to AA/ACS, 1922 Rollins Drive, Alexandria, VA 22307. Our legal address is: 3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 8th Floor, New York NY 10017-2303. *The Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut. (AA/ACS) does not take positions on religious, political, social topics, or issues and does not endorse the positions or opinions given from time to time by contributors to this newsletter.* © 1990–2020 Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut.
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President's Letter

It is with great humility and pride that I have agreed to lead the Alumni Council of AA/ACS. I've been on the council for three years, which has been a very fulfilling experience; so now, to be able to have everyone's trust to take the AA into the next three years is very exciting. I'm looking forward to all of it!

First, I want to thank **Jay Bruder '74** for leading the council for the past three years. Almost everyone who sent congratulatory notes indicated that I "have big shoes to fill." And indeed, I do. Jay was so deliberate and organized in his approach, which proved to be highly effective in getting things done. I appreciate his support going forward as I get acclimated to this new role. We all owe him our thanks. One other member of the council who I want to call out is **Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68**; she has stepped in time and time again wherever she's needed. She has been editor of the *Pot* for the past seven years. I look forward to continuing to work with her. Everyone on the council puts in their time on a volunteer basis and I thank them. I am thrilled to have them all on the team going forward.

I know many of you from my time at ACS, and the reunions; but for the benefit of those that I have not encountered, here's a little of information about me, my background, and my goals for the council.

I was born in Aleppo to an American mother and a Syrian/Lebanese father. When I was quite young, we moved to Beirut where my father took a teaching position in the Electrical Engineering Dept. at AUB. I spent most of my formative years in Beirut; we did come to the US when my Dad furthered his education, but those were temporary stints. I grew up at ACS, as did my siblings **Michael '72**, **Nayla '74**, and **Ray '79**, as my father became Dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture at AUB. We departed with heavy hearts, as he stayed behind, and my mother accompanied us to the US, and we were enrolled in colleges here.

I currently live in Seal Beach, California with my dog Max, while my son and his family live in Las Vegas. After a long successful career in retail, direct mail, and marketing, I am now self-employed as a business coach, trainer, speaker, and mediator.

With one foot firmly planted in my Lebanese heritage, and the other here is the US, I will lead the Alumni Council in the same way I have led my life, which has served me very well indeed. I aspire to be the bridge between the "pre-war" alumni, who mostly reside in the US as American citizens, and the "post-war" group

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Reunion 2022 Continued

Here is how AA/ACS will help:

Before site selection:

- provide you with contact lists of local alumni;
- share the reunion planning handbook – many years of historical data;
- consultation with previous reunions hosts;
- consistent contact and support from a council representative who is the liaison between the committee and the council.

After the site selection:

- letters of authorization to conduct reunion business on behalf of AA/ACS;
- seed money to cover deposits and expenses;
- support on hotel contract negotiation;
- advice from experienced event planners and the Alumni Council.

Proposals don't need to be elaborate. Include the following items:

- location;
- dates - optimum dates and your reasons for choosing them;
- key people - list 3-6 key volunteers including a chairperson and a treasurer by name;
- transportation - list airports, train stations, and major interstate roadways supporting the area. Include airlines maintaining hubs at local airports;
- hotels- email Gina Kano (contact information below) to request the matrix used to compare hotels. Complete it based on preliminary inquiries by web and/or telephone for 2-6 hotels you think would be appropriate. Do not enter into negotiations at this stage. Include transportation means, cost, and time from the airports to the hotel. Rank your preferences in order.
- local attractions - a few local attractions that would interest ACSers including museums and restaurants;
- a program of events is not necessary for proposal.

Contact: Gina Kano president of the AA/ACS Alumni Council at gina.kano@twc.com.

President's Letter Continued

who are largely Lebanese and reside in the Middle East. Our goal is to facilitate a smooth hand off to the next generation of leaders, while we continue to maintain those connections here in US that are vitally important to those in my age group. I saw the beginnings of this at the SLC reunion, where we each learned a little bit more about each other.

I thank you all in advance for your support and I encourage you to contact me if you have suggestions, want to engage in the council, or simply want to chat! I can be reached at ginakano1@gmail.com or 909-227-7659. I'm also on WhatsApp!

With gratitude,

Gina Kano '73

President AA/ACS

Editor's Note

It has been my pleasure to edit the newsletter since 2013. I have enjoyed the many wonderful interactions with ACSers of all ages.

I am handing the *Diaspora Potrzebie* off to **Jay Bruder '74** who will continue to provide you with the news of old friends, classmates, and ACS.

Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68

Follow us on ...



ACS Knights



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut

Alumni Association Financial Report

End of the Year 2019

Thanks to your generosity, the Alumni Association entered 2020 with more than \$83,000 in assets. This includes the \$50,000 set aside in a CD-based contingency fund to cover our exposure in contracting the triennial reunions. In total, our other accounts are sufficient to fund the association's activities for all of 2020 and into 2021, supporting our objective of a cash position adequate to sustain operations for two years. Of note is the continuing response to our appeal to grow donations to the Malcolm Kerr Endowment Fund sufficient to fully fund an annual scholarship.

- By your generosity, the Malcolm Kerr Endowment Fund donations submitted via the association reached more than \$29,000. Coupled with more than \$7,800 of donations submitted directly to ACS, the total of donations reached more \$37,000 in 2019. More donations have accrued in January pushing current donation totals to more than \$39,000.
- You provided about \$11,000 in direct support to the association.

- The quarterly newsletter, other mailings, reunion and election related expenses, and administrative costs came in just over \$28,000. We will continue working to reduce these costs.

In 2020, we intend to continue emphasis on the Malcolm Kerr Fund while maintaining healthy cash balances. Our goal is to grow the scholarship endowment to a total of \$600,000, the level that can support the full annual scholarship. As of the end of December 2019, the estimated value of the endowment was more than \$566,000 including all of the 2019 donations by alumni, just \$33,000 short of our goal. Based on the 2019 results, raising an additional \$33,000 is a very achievable goal. If met, a full scholarship could be awarded by the end of this year. Let's do it!

Submitted by,

Patrick Hinds '56, Outgoing Treasurer
and **Leonard Smith '67**, Incoming Treasurer

AA/ACS TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

INCOME

Malcolm Kerr Contributions	\$29,000
General Fund Contributions	\$11,000
Interest	\$1,000
Total Revenue	\$41,000

EXPENSES

Malcolm Kerr	\$29,000
Management	\$9,000
Newsletter and Donation Solicitation	\$17,000
Total Expenses	\$55,000

FUND BALANCE AS OF BEGINNING OF YEAR \$96,000

CURRENT FUND BALANCE (INCLUDING CDS) \$83,000

Alumni Notes

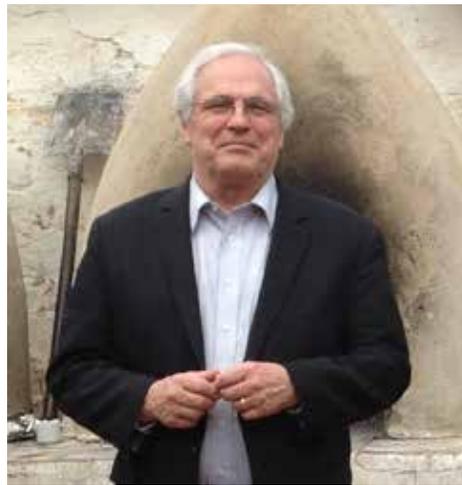
Chris Ross '60 emailed: It's been a while since my last news. After stints for the State Department from 2001 to 2009 working on public diplomacy, advocating reason in Baghdad, working on Iraq in Washington, and serving as Senior Adviser for the Middle East and North Africa at the US Mission to the UN, I was appointed as Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara in 2009.

I then spent eight years trying to get Morocco and the Polisario Liberation Front to negotiate the future of the former colony of Spanish Sahara. This involved nine face-to-face meetings, many trips to meet with the leaders of the region, and semi-annual briefings to the UN Security Council. The talks remained stalemated over Morocco's insistence on limiting the agenda to its proposal for autonomy within Morocco and the Polisario's insistence that its proposal for a referendum of self-determination also be considered, since it had agreed to a UN proposal for a ceasefire in exchange for a referendum in 1991.

From the beginning, Morocco had been unhappy with me because it claimed I had been brainwashed during my years at the US Embassy in Algiers and because I would not take sides and bless its approach. With the arrival of a new UN Secretary-General in 2017, Morocco announced that it would no longer do business with me,

As a result, and on the basis of my reputed skills in drafting and political analysis, I now have a part-time gig on the UN training staff, helping to teach UN staffers from all over the world how to sharpen their skills.

I continue to follow world events mostly



from afar, although my UN gig has taken me to Ashgabat, Libreville, Nairobi, and Jerusalem, and this last October I accompanied a group of Princeton graduate students studying the Western Sahara conflict on a visit to Algeria and the Polisario.

On the home front, I'm blessed with a son and daughter-in-law who are skilled parents and who are raising my thirteen year old granddaughter and ten year old grandson to be amazing youngsters. At age 76, my health is good, although all those years of smoking in the Middle East and North Africa have left me with COPD. Please, if anyone reading this is still a smoker, STOP. Your lungs will thank you.

Philip Davies '67 writes: I recently wrote *Reminiscences My Career As a Humanitarian* recalling forty years of non-profit work in international relief and development assistance helping disadvantaged communities and vulnerable families.

I spent extended periods of time working in twenty-one countries in the Middle East, Africa, and newly-independent states of the former Soviet Union, plus Pakistan, Costa Rica, and Sri Lanka. A good part of

my career was spent in the Middle East, about which I am most passionate.

In the Forward, I give a tip of the hat to my early years at ACS for instilling a love of the Middle East, in general, and Lebanon, in particular, while helping me learn French and Arabic. Here is a snippet.

"Seeds for my career as a humanitarian with a love for the Middle East were sowed when my parents re-located the family, including **Steve '65** (age 14), Philip (age 13), and **Elizabeth '73** (age 7), from a comfortable middle class life in Milwaukee, WI to a foreign country, Lebanon, in 1962.

We set sail for Beirut from Hoboken, NJ on August 22, 1962 on the *Excalibur* of the American Export Lines. At the time, it was cheaper for a family of five and their possessions to travel overseas by sea than air.

The journey upon which we were embarking would have a far reaching and lasting impact on all our lives in ways we could not imagine.

I attended ACS from eighth grade through high school, 1967. This was considered the Golden Age in Lebanon before the civil war (1975 – 1990) which ravaged the country. ACS was a college prep school where the majority of students were Americans who went on to attend college in the US.

I did not have very good grades, but participated in many activities outside of class. I was active in Boy Scouts and became an Eagle Scout. Through scouting with **Mr. Sutton Fac**, I learned to ski and went many times to Faraya and the Cedars. I also enjoyed many camping

Alumni Notes Continued



and hiking trips all over Lebanon where I learned to appreciate the natural beauty of Lebanon and experienced the hospitality of its people. I was also on the basketball and track teams (200-meter dash and high jump) and played trombone in the school and AUB symphonic bands.

The family had a memorable five years in Lebanon and was scheduled to return to the US after my graduation when we were unexpectedly evacuated during the Arab-Israeli Six Day War in June 1967. Dad and mom settled in Montclair, NJ, while I attended Muskingum College (now Muskingum University) located in sleepy New Concord, Ohio. Yearly tuition with room and board was \$3,000. Living in a small town in Ohio was quite different than busy cosmopolitan Beirut. Nevertheless, despite my academic struggles in high school, I discovered that ACS had actually prepared me well for college and I did well in my classes.

For example, my first year, I was placed in advanced French courses based on what I had learned at ACS. I had no clue my French was that good! My senior year I was appointed an Assistant in the Modern Language Department, even though I was not a French major. This earned me \$195 stipend per semester."

By the way, my opus is a desktop publishing effort that I gave to my three children and sister Elizabeth '73 as a Christmas present.

Claire Clemons-Cowan Fac writes she has republished her first short story book *Job's Wednesday* and notes her early stories are her best, as she was struggling with issues of feminism while raising a family. Her short stories are available here: www.loftpress.com. *The Beirutis* is available from from Authorhouse of Bloomington, Indiana.

She travelled extensively during her expatriate years, in 60 countries. Claire lives with one of her daughters and her family in Bethesda, MD and would love to hear from students: 9011 Hempstead Ave, Bethesda, MD 20817-3564.

Alexander H. ter Weele Fac writes that many of the upper school math students he taught in the 1960s have kept in touch with him through his publications. They might be interested to learn his most recent book has just been released *The Call of the Allagash Wilderness Canoeing the Allagash and other Stories*. The subjects range from the wilds of Maine to the city streets of New York; from pastoral descriptions of nature's beauty to unsettling philosophy; from hunting to loving. His publisher writes "A terrific collection of stories. The reader will find them quick and easy to read, yet none are the same. "Survival" contains

the flavor of the wild; "Sweet Deborah" that of the high life of New York; and "A Strange Tale"--hunting in the mountains of Bolivia (Well, not really about hunting at all. Read the story and decide for yourself what it's about!) A fascinating collection!" Alex's best seller is *We Escaped A Family's Flight from Holland During World War Two*, the chronicle of his and his family's escape from the Nazi juggernaut in WWII. Google Alex's name or the title of one of his books, find them widely available in hard cover, paperback, eBook, Kindle, and Nook.

Alex lives now in the mountains of Virginia overlooking the Appalachian Trail. Go to his website, find his address, and go and visit him! He says you are welcome, one and all!

I Remember Beirut “Goodnight Sweetheart”

By Bill Isely '43

As a member of the class of '43 who left Beirut in the 1941 Diaspora I can testify that in old age things that happened in your youth were more clearly remembered than what happened yesterday. I attribute this phenomenon to better visualization of past happenings, particular of my first two years of high school at ACS which were socially formative years to start to make me into a adult. Past scenes of ACS come to me easily when I relax and am ready to fall asleep.

Since I lived at the BD much of what I was exposed to was associated with the BD and my classmates who shared my experiences. The summer before I registered as a freshman I had worked at a job at which I earned enough money to buy a Raleigh bicycle on arrival and it gave me the mobility to explore many interesting places in the afternoons after class.

One vivid memory was looking north over AUB from the boulevard along the coast and watch a French submarine surface on the way to the harbor.

While I had seen streetcars in Istanbul in the summer of 1941, I didn't get to ride them before coming to Beirut. I remember one evening date when Linda Dewey, **Jim Stoltzfus '43**, **Margaret “Marga” Leavitt '43**, and I went to the movies by streetcar, chaperoned by Marga's mother. Some of the local kids hung on to the back of the streetcar in order to avoid paying a fare, but we were not allowed to even if we had wanted to as it was considered dangerous.

One of the great memories was taking a life saving class off the rocks at the AUB swimming location, accessed through a tunnel that went under the coastal boulevard. I was paired with Marga the first year in going to the dances that were held about once a month, and on one occasion, going through the tunnel, I put an arm across her shoulders, a daring act for us.

Our social events included more than just dances, we had a paired treasure hunt on one occasion and on another, hide and seek in the Dodge's large house. Several were day events were sponsored by the ACS, a trip to the Krak des Chevaliers, and then to the Dog River caves. Our school principal, **Mr. Strong Fac**, was the leader on these trips and was helpful in finding a small group that included Marga and myself who got lost in the caves.

A low point in my ACS experience was when I arrived back for my second year in the fall of 1940, Marga was paired with a new partner and would not even talk to me, a somewhat awkward

situation as we were in all the same classes except French. I remember climbing into the banyan tree at the AUB where Marga's and my initials were carved that help me remember when times were happier.

Social activities, mostly dances, were less organized my second year as many of the class members above us had returned to the US, along with our BD housemother, **Miss Caroline Matthews Fac '39-'40**, who was replaced with **Mrs. Lavonian Fac**. I remember when we did have dances that we still signed up on the girls' dance cards and the last dance was always with the partner you had come with. “Goodnight Sweetheart”, was always played at the end to let everyone know the party was over. Social behavior generally followed that in the United States, with a few years time lag, and I remember one innovation that was particularly hard for the boys to adjust to. In my first year the air space between dancers was about eight inches, but when **Helen Riggs-Rice '42** returned from the US at the start of my second year she reported that the proper spacing was zero and we might as well get used to it as that would be expected when we returned to the US.

The return came suddenly in May of 1941 while we were rehearsing a play called “June Mad” that was appropriately scheduled to be put on the following month. Instead, with less than 24 hours notice we were evacuated for a five-week stay in Jerusalem and then on for another five weeks in Cairo before taking ship to the US. Both cities had their distractions but I particularly remember attending a 4th of July party in Cairo at the embassy put on for all US citizens in that country. I think there were about fifteen of us of high school age from the ACS having our first introduction to champagne and cigarettes, behavior that was appalling to another group of our age from the area of the Sudan who had been brought up on more strict missionary standards. We got to find out that we were not that different when mixed groups were put on one ship going around Africa and another going via Australia to get us to the US in about three months.

To pass the time on the trip around Africa it was only natural that the young people paired off after about the first week of sorting it out. I ended up with Ann D., teaching her how to dance in exchange for learning about Shakespeare. When we got to New York Ann headed for Oklahoma and I for Kansas. I saw Ann twice after that, once when I was passing through Oklahoma City when I was discharged from the Navy and later by a real coincidence on a train when she was recently married going on her honeymoon trip.

“Goodnight Sweetheart” Continued

In thinking back on some of the others from my general class period it seems that many permanent and compatible pairings took place between individuals who had shared the ACS experience. I know one young lady, a friend of Marga's, who called me years later looking for an ACS partner.

Lost Alums

William Goellner '67
Charles Helling '67
David Gonshor '68
Nadine Barbir '68
Deborah Coulter-Allen '70
Thomas Gray '71

Lydia Bergent '75
Gulseren Sharif-Naqi '75
Heather Hilgendorf-Miller '89
Emma Beelaerts-von Bokland '08
Michael Moussa Fac

SAVE THE DATE! 50th 1970 ACS Class Reunion

November 6-7-8, 2020
Washington, DC

Preliminary plans include Friday reception, Saturday talk, time to visit or tour, and Saturday banquet dinner. Additional information with costs and full schedule coming soon via USPS Mail.
Contact anne_bruder@hotmail.com

How to Opt-In for Electronic Newsletter ONLY or Request the Full Color Newsletter in Addition to the Hard Copy

Use this link: <http://bit.ly/ACSPotrzebie>

Many alums have opted in to the full-color, expanded electronic version only and will not receive the black and white hard copy via the postal system. AA/ACS will save trees and save the high mailing cost. Remember, you will need to update us if you change your email address as once we stop using your street address for hard copy mailings, we won't know if you have moved.

We've included several recent photos by Børre Ludvigsen '64



A rare photo of our photographer Børre Ludvigsen.
© Børre Ludvigsen



Protestors blocking the Corniche in front of the old US Embassy site
© Børre Ludvigsen



Beirut from the mountains

© Børre Ludvigsen



Storm clouds off Beirut

© Børre Ludvigsen



The kaak seller on Maamari Street

© Børre Ludvigsen

In Memoriam

Marjorie “Marge” Louise Hellmann-Campeotto ’60 passed away peacefully, at her home, on Sunday, October 20, 2019.

Marjorie was born in Berkeley, CA on December 18, 1943 to William and Helen Hellmann. She had two brothers, **Richard ’60** and Jerry, and one sister, Louise.

Some of her childhood was spent in Pasadena, CA, while the majority of her formative years found her in Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon, where she attended The American Community School.

Marge, known for her bright intelligence, studied Liberal Arts at New York’s Keuka College, and went on to also graduate Easton, Pennsylvania’s Churchman Business School in 1962 with a focus on legal studies.

She enjoyed a successful career in the legal field, spanning over 30 years, supporting prominent attorneys serving the Stroudsburg community. Blessed with artistic hands, Marge enjoyed a lifetime of creative arts around sewing. Marjorie and her husband of over 50 years, Richard Campeotto were joined in marriage in 1963. Marjorie was predeceased by her husband Richard, son William, brother Jerry, and sister Louise Moore. She is survived by her brother, Richard Hellmann, and two of her three children: Craig and Denise. Marjorie was blessed with 12 grand-children, and two great-grandchildren who continue her legacy of family, love, and support.

Reported by **Borre Ludvigsen ’64** who writes: The Hellmanns were our neighbors in Sidon in the 50s, and Margie was my “older sister” when I first started at the Tapline School there. She also kept a watchful eye when I went to ACS in the 8th grade.

Anne Avantaggio Meyer Fac died peacefully in Newburyport, MA on Jan. 5, 2020 at the age of 93.

Born in Newton, Mass., she was the daughter of Frank O. and Mary F. (Sisto) Avantaggio. She was educated in Newton public schools, Radcliffe College, and the Harvard School of Education.

She was a longtime resident of Cambridge, but also lived in Beirut, Lebanon, Tangier, Morocco, and London, England.

As a life-long learner and educator, she taught diverse subjects and grade levels at the American Community School at Beirut and schools in Massachusetts. Anne was an active fundraiser and community volunteer with interests in conservation and public parks, notably the Boston Natural Areas Fund and River Bend Park, Cambridge. Her passions included music, her gardens, archaeology, and the quest for Middle East peace.

She was the widow of Professor A. J. Meyer of Harvard University. She was also predeceased by her parents; her brothers, August and Frank; and her son Stephen. She is survived by her sister, Jean Gaffney of Lake Oswego, OR and daughter, Barbara Meyer of Newburyport.

Reported by **Peter Ian Kuniholm ’54** who writes: Please pass this along to the editors of the *Pot*. Anne Avantaggio was my 7th and 8th grade Latin teacher in Beirut at ACS from 1949 -1950 and was a long-time Patron of the Aegean Dendrochronology Project. Some years back, maybe 20-25, she even wrote an article about me in the *Pot*. Seventy years ago, when she was fresh out of Radcliffe, we used to fight for the honor of peeling her lunch-time carrots for her.