

the diaspora potrezebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

Volume LXIV Number 2

Our 44th year of publication

Summer 2022

See you in Baltimore! August 4-7, 2022



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The Diaspora Potrzebie

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The Diaspora Potrzebie is published quarterly as a nonprofit activity of the Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut. Subscriptions are provided free to all members of the alumni association. Please make tax deductible donation checks payable to the Alumni Association of ACS (AA/ACS).

All address information should be sent to AA/ACS, Glen Grubbs, 20 Franklin St., Salem NH 03079. 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.* © 1990–2022 Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut.

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Planned Reunion Activities

Thursday, August 4

- Evening Welcome Reception

Friday, August 5

- "Class Dinners" - small groups of classmates will gather for dinner at different area restaurants.
- Friday Fun ! At 8:30, back at the Lord Baltimore Hotel: Make all that knowledge you've gained over the years finally pay off! This evening is a mix of music, trivia and more.

Saturday, August 6

- Morning - ACS UPDATE meeting
- Evening - banquet and dancing

Follow updates on the reunion website: <http://acsreunion.com#>

Message from the Editor

Dear Readers,

I hope you enjoy this "Summer Special" issue of *The Diaspora Potrzebie*. I thought it would be nice to have some stories from alumni old and new as light summer reading before the summer's main event: The Triennial Reunion in Baltimore, Maryland. That event will, of course, be the main focus of the Fall Issue, as well as any stories and news you all choose to send to me. I have loved reading and editing everything that has come into my mailbox during my very short time, so far, as editor. I feel privileged to be doing this job.

Best wishes from Alice
alice.ludvigsen@gmail.com

Art at ACS

Workshop with Ghada Zoghby



Ghada Zoghby at ACS

Editor's note: Throughout the past year I have become a huge fan of Lebanese artist Ghada Zoghby's art. One day I saw a post on the ACS Beirut Alumni Instagram account and contacted Joanne Saad - Art teacher at ACS. This is what she said:

I organized a workshop with Ghada after our IB Visual Arts Grade 11 students attended her exhibition at the Galerie Janine Rbeiz in October 2021. She had been so impressed with

them at her "Pretty Abandoned" exhibition, and she immediately agreed to do a workshop and give them an artist's talk.

Part of the IB Visual Arts course is to be able to connect artists to their own process in developing their skills and knowledge of art.



Ghada Zoghby and Joanne Saad with the IB Visual Arts Grade 11 students.



Two of Ghada's paintings from the Pretty Abandoned exhibition.



ACS Visual Arts students at work



Continued on page 4

Art at ACS Continued

Christina Lund '63



It's easier to remember where I was when I made art:

We moved to Connecticut when I was six. I remember drawing faces - a sideways "c" shape for the bottom of the face and spiky zig zag hair on top - sort of

a flat top. Like all the girls I was into horses and so I tried to draw them, too. It was during junior high that I fell in love with art - with thinking about art and making art. I had a fabulous art teacher who, in ninth grade, had us design a record cover, make a movie (written by Zazel Wilde - real name and she was a beauty - and I was one of the two camera people. It was called The Witch Kit). We made floor plans, an elevation, and a model of the house we designed. We learned about drawing the spaces around things and talked about ideas like "what if all houses were prefab." We drew ½ page of the newspaper without actually writing the words. We drew a bicycle.

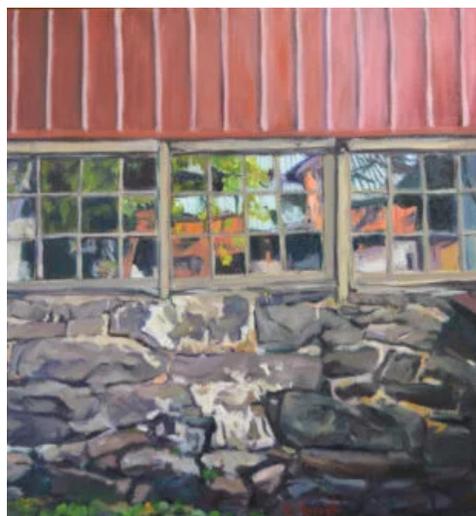
He was an amazing teacher - Guyer Scott Wright - and I was a little in love with him. My one year at Staples High School wasn't memorable art wise.



Cabin at Tolman Pond

I went to ACS for 11th and 12th grades and Ray Ruehl was our wonderful art teacher. He let us go, as I remember. George Herrmann decided he wanted to learn about egg tempera and spent a lot of time working on that. I did several large paintings. One was in black and white and was supposed to express sadness or depression.

I still have a small version of that one. The other was a kind of prophet. I painted it on unprimed paper and it was loaded with paint. Someone bought it and all I could think of later was that it probably fell apart. Even then, the oil was seeping through the



Penterra Barn

paper. It was my first sale.

I was an art major at St. Olaf College. It was an okay program, but not great. However, they did invite an artist in residence whom I later took a class from at the Corcoran when I lived in Washington DC after graduating.

I took art classes at Aix-en-Provence when I was there for my junior year. I fell in love with Cezanne and learned a lot about color and gray and composition. I continued to take art classes when I could - at the Corcoran and later; after I was married and we lived in Los Angeles I took classes at Cal State LA. One of the drawing teachers there was amazing. She taught Life Composition - a composition class based around drawing the live model.

After we moved to Maryland and my second child was born, I decided to get back into painting. A woman who owned a gallery here, had a studio and offered classes, so I started painting with her.

Eventually I showed my paintings at her gallery which was, for a while, the only gallery in town. I joined The Artists Gallery (a co-op) from 2007-2021. While I was teaching art at an elementary school here I learned that teachers could take classes at the Corcoran for a reasonable price. A friend and I drove down to Washington DC



Rainy Morning on 5th Street

Art at ACS Continued

every Monday evening for about two years taking classes from Judy Southerland.

When I retired I decided to learn more about painting and I took several classes and workshops and ended up doing a lot of plein air painting. Maryland is a beautiful state and there are quite a few plein air painters around here. We often go out as a group and, as a consequence, I've seen a lot of beautiful landscapes around the Frederick area. The old towns are good for cityscapes,

as well. We have several opportunities to paint or draw live models here also.

Right now I'm in a kind of hiatus. I'm taking a break from the gallery. I've been spending a lot of time learning French because my son married a French woman. Their two sons are bilingual and spend a lot of

time in France. I went out to paint last week to do a plein air painting and it was fun to get back into it. We'll see. I do have a basement full of paintings and I'm not exactly sure where I'm going with art right now.



Fish Dreams



Tina Lund '63 and husband Tom visiting Børre Ludvigsen '64 and wife Toufoul in Halden, Norway, 2014



Artist Mi Robertson with her painting, Corn, currently hanging in the E Bar Double R Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

Mi Robertson '71

I attended ACS from 1969-1971(Class of '71). A huge impact on my perception of art was Ray Reuhl's Art History class. I loved that class. His lectures were a wonderful learning experience resulting in many college Art History courses spent sitting in the dark watching slides, but none of them were

as inspiring and informative as that ACS course and Mr. Reuhl. It all resulted in a love of museums, a BA degree from the Museum School of Fine Arts/Tufts, teaching art, and the confidence to develop my personal artistic skills.

As a child growing up in the interior of Saudi Arabia miles away from the closest settlement, I was often left to my own creativity to keep me busy, always building something, arranging found objects, and to my mother's dismay, putting things in places just because they "fit so perfectly in that space". There were hundreds of drawings made of my left hand, the one subject I could pose exactly the way

I wanted it. I carved things out of hard dirt clods, I used the local obsidian and made 'stone age tools', and twisted wire and discarded radio transistors to build 'things'. One of these creations looked like it should move, go, do something.... so I stuck it in the electric outlet ... and it certainly did



Continued on page 6

Art at ACS Continued



The "necklace" is made of exploded shell casings found on a beach in Bermuda. The patina initially caught my eye and it was only later that I discovered what the fragments were. After WWII unused ammunition was blown up on the beach.... I knew I wanted to make something beautiful out of something so ugly, deadly and destructive.

do something! My first electric shock in the name of Art!

When I was 14 a neighbor offered to teach a class in welding to anyone who would like to learn. I knew that my mother, newly graduated from high school and looking for a way out of the sharecropper farm life, had taken a job during WWII as an overhead arc welder in a shipyard. She loved the work and encouraged me to try it, although all of the other students were adults. As I continued with the welding I began to understand

how difficult her job really was. She was good at it and she was the last woman they fired when the men came home from the war. Several of my sculptures have themes regarding women working in the male dominated industrial world.



I have such an interest in everything...Technique, media! I have welded metal, drawn with pastels, charcoal, pencil and ink, painted with watercolor, acrylic, and oil, carved stone and wood, used ancient techniques such as batik, mosaic and beadwork. I am interested in how things fit together or come apart. The most unlikely things can fall together or fall apart and become a statement. Stone ...hard, unforgiving, eternal. Petals of a flower ... silken, soft,



Great Aunt Clara

fading. The yin and yang of nature.



When growing up in a desert environment, sand and stones become part of your life. I maintain a sand collection from all over the

world. I work with stones and other natural objects, sometimes combining them with steel or other metals and will bring them together because they just fit together or look like they should.

After living over half of my life in the deserts of the Middle East, the nature of New England leaves me stunned by its lush bounty and beauty but the wonders of the rest of the world including history, nature, culture,



Nelson Sleeping

Art at ACS Continued

and art are also my influences. Generally my sculptures are small-scale using mixed media including natural objects, wood, copper and steel. The landscapes, still-lives, and portraits are in watercolor, batik, acrylic, and pastel. Both my sculpture and painting reflect my passion for travel and experiencing other cultures. Many pieces evoke a quiet peace and have a spiritual nature, while others are quirky and amusing.

Hilary Henry Neff '72

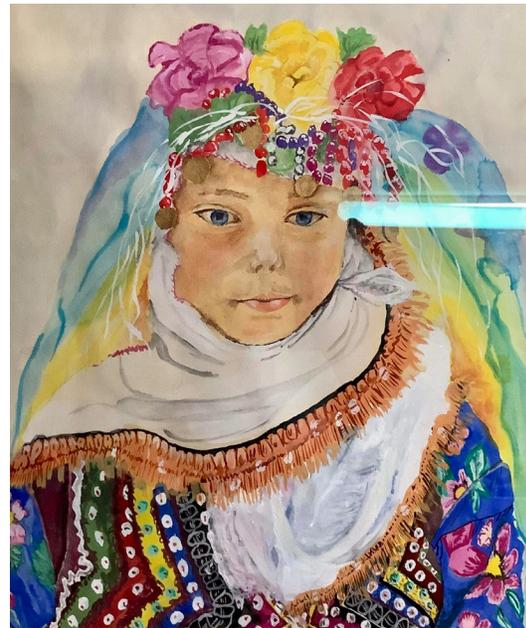
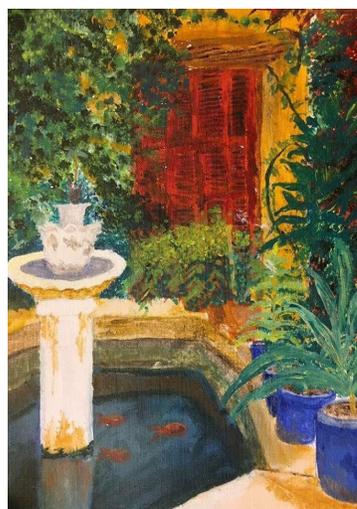
Art has been in my life since I was born. My grandfather was an amazing artist, having many shows in Paris. My mother did some beautiful pieces and my dad took up drawing and ceramics in retirement. My sister does amazing things as well.

I was accused, in first grade, of being a daydreamer, but what I was doing was escaping. Art became that escape for me. I could draw those things I longed for in life. I could lose myself in it.

More often than not I could be found in my bedroom doing sketches rather than my homework!



In first grade I won a first prize for my painting in an art show (magician) and that alone gave me the courage to go through life thinking, "I must be ok at this!"



Little Girl at a Bulgarian Wedding
by Hilary Henry

I majored in fine arts at Bennett College and was surprised one day to find one of my class assignments framed and hung in front of the Dean's office. (Dean Nystrom from Beirut!) Sadly, when the college went bankrupt that painting disappeared.

After college I decided to move to Florence, Italy, to continue my art, only to find that everyone who thought they were artists had the same idea, so I studied silversmithing and eventually taught it. Seven years later I was ready to come back to the States. Since then I have dabbled, giving my art to people as gifts, framing some of them, mostly piling up stacks of paintings in my garage.

Of course I am obsessed with drawing old houses in Beirut. Watching them disappear wrenches my heart, and hopefully, through art, they can be preserved. I pushed art on my son, who has talent, but never went anywhere with it. Now that he is a firefighter, he seems to be getting back into it, which thrills me. Nothing like art to destress! Even if one thinks they can't draw, all it takes is a paper and pencil!

Family Stories

The Allen Family by Trigger Allen '70



Tripoli, Libya, circa 1955. Family on route "somewhere" in our first car.
Photo credit: Trigger Allen '70

Family bound, and yet so far...but never forever. How else to describe a life revolving around travel, separation and discovery.

My first real memories start at age four in Tripoli, Libya. I have fleeting memories of Baghdad, Iraq, where I was born prior to our moving to Benghazi, then Tripoli, Libya, where we settled several years before returning stateside. Most ingrained memories include incidents where I became aware of the regular shenanigans of my three siblings, Bill, Bob and Sheri, on my crib territory, then the rest of the house, especially when parents were gone to one event or another. My father, Arthur Allen, was a career Foreign Service Officer, more specifically an Arabist, so we were mostly assigned to Middle East posts when not serving stateside. It was just the beginning of a life full of change until adulthood (or so we thought) for me and my brothers and sister. I'm feeling these emotions and memories more strongly, in large part because I have been reminiscing a lot of late. My eldest brother, Bill (Arthur William Allen), passed away at 74 from complications of Parkinson's on May 21, 2020, during the beginning of the pandemic. Then, just this past New Year's Eve, my second brother, Bob (Robert Boyd Allen), also passed away at 74 from issues related to frontotemporal dementia. Both originally accompanied my parents on their first overseas post to Beirut Lebanon in 1948 at the ages of 3 and 1. My sister, Sheri (Sheri Allen-Wright), born in Algeria two years later in 1950, now lives within a couple hours

of Austin, close to the nearby town of Somerville, Texas. Her dear husband, Flynn Wright, passed away nearly two decades ago on Christmas Day 2004 from complications associated with hemophilia. Covid has made all of our visits more difficult but not impossible, although we have all experienced how it has limited social interactions.

Anyone who is associated with how the State Department/Foreign Service operates knows it is a life filled with regular new foreign post assignments, sometimes even last minute changes after having packed up and departed for another post. Stateside assignments could be less than a year or more than four years depending on the circumstances of the job. As an example of how convoluted our lives were, Brother Bill went to four different high schools in three countries, Bob attended four different high schools in four countries, I attended three different high schools in two countries, while my sister, Sheri, attended five years at ACS (7th-12th) spending only 8th grade stateside. Things just kind of fell haphazardly into place as we went along. Pre-high school attendance was no less convoluted. I still envy my sister for having the consistency of those years at ACS while our father was Consul General in Dhahran. It was simply how things fell into place that my dad's assignments worked out in her favor. I also felt fortunate to have attended ACS for the two years while my sister



USA 1957, First Home Leave vacation across America from DC to California (Disneyland) and back in our new Rambler station wagon. The four of us kids rode in the back of the wagon. Only my parents front seats were up.

Family Stories Continued



Khobar, Saudi Arabia. 1967. Obligatory family photo required a trip to the local town, Al-Khobar, and a long wait for the photographer during a time when most of us had other agendas, as can be seen in our faces. Our mom always worked hard to get these family photos when we were beginning to be spread out in our lives (College, etc.)

was also in attendance. Another fortuitous juncture occurred when brother Bill attended AUB (American University of Beirut) for one year under the Junior Year Abroad Program from his College in Ohio. For that full academic year Bill, Sheri and I lived in Beirut. Again our parents were both back in Saudi Arabia holding down the fort (Consulate General Compound), so to speak. After spending 9th and 10th grades at ACS I was very disappointed to have to return to the US, because I had loved my time in Lebanon so much. I spent my Junior year at Highland Park High School in Dallas, Texas, then went on to Woodrow Wilson HS (recently renamed Jackson-Reed HS) in Washington DC, where I graduated in 1970. However, there was an advantage to this perceived chaos.



Dhahran, 1989. My brother Bob and I with our families. My office in Dhahran was little more than 200 meters from Bob's for the 20 years of our overlapping employment in Dhahran.

One unmistakable part of growing up overseas is that it fosters a normalcy out of flying back and forth each semester to one's home away from boarding school. "Home

leave" while growing up as a Foreign Service dependent, or "Repat" as we called our annual repatriation at Saudi Aramco, was an expected part of life. Launching oneself into a similar lifestyle as an adult became rather seamless. Three of the four of us Allen children ended up working overseas as adults.

Brother Bill attended Wilmington College in Ohio after graduating from Wakefield High School in Virginia. He spent the first 4 months in Dhahran working as a volunteer PE teacher at the Dhahran Academy on the Consulate General compound, where I attended 7th grade. Almost every day after school he'd drive the two of us to Aziziyah beach to snorkel and sometimes camp out at the beach on weekends. Those daily snorkeling trips to the beach likely had much to do with my ultimate career choice in Marine Biology/ Environmental Science. He then left to begin College in Ohio for the spring semester.

As I mentioned, he attended AUB in Beirut for his Junior Year Abroad and would often visit my sister and I at ACS or take us out to eat in town. Once

he graduated from Wilmington College he joined the Peace Corps, working in Malaysia where he taught biology. He extended his stay, started teaching English, and met his wife Hwi Joo. They returned to Austin and had their two



Dhahran, 1982. Bob and I headed somewhere in Dhahran Aramco Camp with our first-borns, Sara and Paul.

children, Kai and Leah. He received an MA degree in Science Education and moved to Victoria, Texas, where he taught biology. After one year there, he and his family moved to Algeria where he taught biology for 12 years. On his return to Austin he obtained A PHD in Science Education and completed his career teaching at both ACC (Austin Community College) and UT Austin before retiring.

Brother Bob spent many of his teenage years going back and forth to high school in Turkey when the family lived in Saudi Arabia. He moved on to college in the US while my father was assigned Consul General in Dhahran. I was privileged to spend extra time with Bob when he decided to start college in the

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Family Stories Continued



Austin, Texas, 1995. The last full family gathering with our mom. Vacations were often coordinated to overlap. Our father had passed away unexpectedly years earlier, but she was able to catch up with all of her children with their families during that visit.

spring, just as I had with Bill. Bob stayed in Dhahran for the first semester and began his attendance at VPI (Virginia Polytechnic Institute) later the next year. He also volunteered as PE teacher at Dhahran Academy that first semester, while I was there for 8th grade. After school we'd often go to either the Aramco or the Dhahran Airfield swimming pool. He would also chauffeur me to friends' houses. This was a chance to spend some special time one on one, sorely lacking when all four of us had been bundled together most of our lives (see car photos).

After college, Bob spent two years as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam before returning stateside and eventually working in the insurance industry. He then ended up working overseas in the Insurance and Finance Department at Aramco (now Saudi Aramco) virtually down the road from the Consulate General compound we had inhabited a couple decades before. Two years later, in 1981, I joined Aramco as a Marine Scientist in the Environmental Unit, having spent my undergraduate and graduate years going to school in Austin and Port Aransas, TX. So it was in 1981 that we (myself, wife and child) found ourselves getting a ride from my brother and his wife, from the Dhahran Airport into temporary Aramco housing, and within several days seeing people I hadn't seen in over a decade, mostly Aramco Brats who had returned there to work. There we were, two brothers living within

blocks of each other, yet across the world from Austin, where our parents now lived in retirement. My oldest daughter, Sara, was just 6 months old when we arrived in Dhahran and her sister Laura was born two years later in Dhahran. They were both able to see what my life had been like growing up at much the same age. Bob had met his wife, Janice, when she was an "Aramco Brat" back in the 1960's when we were living at the Consulate General in Dhahran. Yes indeed, they got married and had one son, Paul, (second generation Aramco Brat), and ended up living in and retiring from Dhahran to Scottsdale, Arizona. I ended up retiring from Dhahran two years later and returning to Austin. We so cherished those years of being able to celebrate all events with intimate family so far away, yet so close in reality. Janice also had family in Dhahran during many of those years. Both of her parents, Paul and Rhea Cyr, and her sister, Wendy, also worked in the Kingdom during much of our time in Saudi, making family gatherings common events. My brother Bill and his two children, Kai and Leah, also came to visit Dhahran during Christmas of 2000 shortly before our departure. This allowed him to share that part of his childhood with his own children, as Bob and I already had with our own.



**Austin, TX 2018.
Allen Family Reunion – The four Allens**

One of the reasons I chose to attend the University of Texas in Austin as an undergraduate was the fact that my sister Sheri was already there, and I knew the transition would be smoother with family nearby. Sheri and I lived in the same complex

Family Stories Continued

during my first year, but I was always able to confide in her throughout the years in Austin before departing for my job in Dhahran eleven years later. Sheri continued her education and received her BA in History, BS in Nursing and MEd in Health Education. She specialized in Physical Rehabilitation and Psyche and later formed her own company, Step Ahead, which involved Consulting in Nursing Education while she also worked as a Staff Psyche Nurse in College Station, TX.



Austin, Texas, 2019 - Last major Allen gathering before Covid

Our parents retired back to Austin in 1975, where our mother had gone to high school before moving to DC and meeting our father. All of us, except Bob and his family, ended up living in Austin off and on. As it so happens, six of us are University of Texas alumni (three generations), and five are Aramco Brats (two generations). During the last decade we've continued to have

family reunions here in Austin, our last in 2019 pre-Covid. Future reunions will no doubt be different with the loss of both brothers, yet positive in that we have new family members to add, including grandchildren and spouses.

As alluded to above, although most of our lives were filled with uncertainty regarding our futures, we all managed to remain in contact with so many of us still living in and around Austin, Texas, as a pseudo home base. I can only revel in the fact that I

have been able to spend so much cherished time with extended family all my life in spite of the inevitable separations we all faced. I now delight in the special time I get to spend with my children and grandchildren and my extended family in Austin, as well as more occasional visits with my sister and brother's families also living in Texas and Arizona.



**Tripoli, Libya 1956. At the beach.
One of our favorite hangouts.
Photo credits: Trigger Allen '70**

The Sheridan Family

To begin with, my late grandfather, an Irish/American, served in World War One, left Brooklyn, New York, for Egypt in 1919, and formed an Indent Company (in today's terms, a dealership). In 1929, he formed a Cosmetic Company, a firm which my family runs to this date. My late parents, R.I.P., left us this legacy. As a family, we have had business in Egypt, Greece, Lebanon and Cyprus. My late grandfather was one of the few Americans awarded the Award of the Cedars, given to him by the late President of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, in 1958. My father, as well as us five (5) siblings were all born in Egypt of American parents. We take pride in being the oldest American family in Egypt.

My sister '67, my brother '75 and I '77, attended ACS before the Lebanese Civil War, followed by college in California.

Richard A. Sheridan '77

The Story of Ali Sbeih, Class of 2021

Maya Mouhaidly from the development office has followed the group of Palestinian students who first embarked on their journey at ACS through the Palestinian Scholarships Fund. Maya used to teach MS science before hanging up her teacher's hat and moving to development. This is her description of Ali, whom we wanted to write about when he graduated with honors and a scholarship to Amherst College:

Ali Sbeih joined ACS in 2014 as a grade 6 Palestinian Scholarship student. Initially he was very shy, he barely made eye contact and spoke in a very low tone. As months and years passed Ali grew up into a fully engaged student in all aspects of the community, be it sports, music, or academics. By the time he graduated he had started helping his Palestinian community in the Bourj al Barajneh camp with personal initiatives influenced by his own experience at ACS.

When Ali was awarded a scholarship to Amherst, his father initially didn't want him to leave, as he was worried Ali would lose his connection to his family. The college counselor as well as the high school principal had to convince him to let Ali go, and the family is so very proud of him.



Ali with Ruth and Stephen Hickman at their home for an end of semester dinner. Photo: Ruth Harms '73

The following is a report by Ruth Harms '73

"So that's what B.D. stands for" commented Ali after I showed him photos of our boarding department at ACS in my 1973 yearbook. He had always wondered why his classes were held in a building he knew only as B.D. Ali Sbeih, ACS Class

of 2021, is now an Amherst College Class of 2025 student, and thanks to the ACS Alumni Association, I was able to reach out and welcome him to my own hometown of Amherst, Massachusetts.

Ali attended ACS as a day student (since that's all there is now at the school) traveling daily from 7th grade through 12th. His parents and two younger sisters live in Beirut.

Due to COVID restrictions when he arrived on campus, it was the end of October before we were able to welcome him for a meal at



Ali with Ruth and Donna. Photo: Ruth Harms '73

our home. Also joining us for this visit was my sister, Donna Harms Hansen '74. Over the course of the semester we were able to have Ali join us for several Sunday lunches, and I think he enjoyed having a home cooked meal as long as I didn't include lentils, which he let me know he was allergic to.

Over the course of our times together, I asked Ali if he felt he was prepared at ACS for the workload he would have in college. He said he had acquired good time management skills at ACS so that he could balance classes, his work study job, and participating in social activities such

as playing recreational soccer. Ali is very happy with the choices of food in the college dining hall, his current favorite being Fajitas. He also enjoys the freedom college has given him to choose some of the classes he's interested in while still completing the requirements for his computer science major. I joked with him that I noticed he's not taking any social science classes. (I was an

anthropology major at my college.)



Ali and a friend at Amherst College, October 2021. Photo: Ali Sbeih '21

Ali has taken advantage of the nature and outdoors surrounding the Amherst college campus. He likes to spend time walking on the bike trail and playing soccer with friends. He didn't mind the winter.

The Story of Ali Sbeih, Class of 2021 Continued



Ali and Ruth at Thanksgiving 2021.
Photo: Ruth Harms '73'

He saw snow for the first time and had snowball fights and liked just walking around campus: "It was beautiful".

This semester Ali has focused on his computer science major. He was chosen to be a judge for a virtual coding contest for high school students. He also has joined the Muslim Students Association and Middle Eastern Club on campus. He participated in Ramadan and Eid events on campus and the celebrations of National Arab American Heritage month.

Now that his freshman year is over, Ali is staying on campus for a couple of months, working in dining services for Graduation and Reunion, as well as beginning research as part of his internship for a new computer science course, "Algorithms and Visualization," to be taught by one of his professors.

Our family plans to share some of the fun summer festivals and activities here in Western Massachusetts with Ali before he leaves for Beirut July 22nd. We will also welcome him back to Amherst in the fall when he returns for his sophomore year!

Latest update from Ruth on June 22: Ali and I had a great afternoon of strawberry picking yesterday.. his first time on a farm he said! He took a quart back to the dorm with him! He sounded very interested in more experiences like that and also he'll be joining my husband and me to watch the July 4th fireworks next weekend!



Strawberry Fields Forever - Ruth '73 and Ali '21.



And here is Ali's story, in his own words:

Hello Alice,

My education up until fifth grade took place in an UNWRA school for refugees. From a young age, I used to get high grades at school and ranked first in my class. My academic achievements earned me the opportunity to attend the American Community School Beirut on a full scholarship. September 2014 marked the start of my journey at ACS.

At ACS, the environment was different and unprecedented for me. Technology played a significant role in the education system, the schedule was long, and the structure was different, but most importantly, everyone spoke English fluently. Every day I worked hard on myself, knowing the great benefits I would be afforded from the opportunity of studying at ACS. As a result, my life became split between two distinct communities, my own and the school's. I didn't lose my confidence; instead, I was determined to work and do my best. It was hard, and it took patience, but eventually, I was able to make friends while maintaining solid grades. I began engaging in various activities, sports, and community service. ACS provided me with valuable education, allowed me to explore my personality and interests through various activities, and gave me many great experiences.

My family and I live in Burj El Barajneh refugee camp. During my senior year, I decided that I would like to study abroad, specifically in the US. So I applied and got admitted to Amherst College. My parents felt very proud but also hesitant about letting me study abroad. However, they let me decide for myself and supported me. At ACS, I enjoyed the beautiful campus, clubs, and community. I met friends who made ACS more fun. Currently, I'm enjoying the landscape of the US, the diversity of people, and the many resources available at Amherst College. This year I was involved in multiple clubs like the soccer club, middle eastern club, and electronics club. I also worked on-campus jobs like Phonathon (calling alumni), sports statistician, and dining. This summer, I'm working in the computer science department on a new course, and once I finish, I'm going back home to visit my family and hang out with my ACS friends.

Best regards,

Ali

Alumni Notes

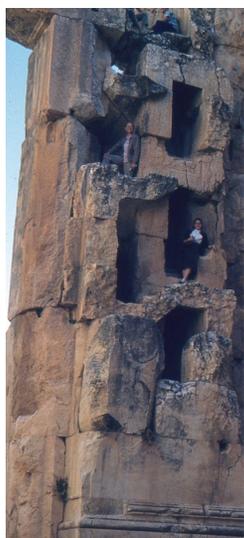
We received the following message from **Phyllis Constan:**

I just finished reading the lovely Potrzebie tribute to Sam and with tears in my eyes want to thank you so much. I know many others were involved in producing this and hope you can pass on my many thanks to them.

I met Sam when I was 16 at a Colby College summer program and my life was changed. I was serious, studious, and shy and he brought me out of my shell. He was a unique person, with many interests, opinions, talents, and skills and we had a long, loving and joyful life. One of his great traits was his respect for everyone he met no matter their station in life, which in turn brought him respect and great affection.

I'm wondering if anyone has a copy of the speech he delivered at graduation (not sure of the date, but I think the 100th anniversary). It would be a good resource for some quotes.

Again, thank you for getting this to me. I really loved it. Fondly, Phyllis



From **Monroe Pastermack '53:** I just read the latest edition of the Pot: Wonderful memorial to Sam Constan. I also noticed an obituary for **Bob Swanson**. I believe that's him at the top of the steps of the Temple of Bacchus in Baalbeck. He was quite the fellow. I had a wonderful

surprise this week when four ACS alumni from across the U.S. popped in to visit me while touring the Asheville, NC, area. In the photo, left-to-right, are **Barbara Croft ACS '68, Jeff Hutchins '65, Jennie Smith '67, Mary Clark '66, and Gail Padgett '67**. We were all at ACS and living in the BD during my senior year. The statue is carved from the stump of a hundred-year-old white oak in my yard. It depicts Denton the Dragon and Little Rachel, the main characters in my book of children's stories. (See www.Dentonthe-Dragon.com) Cheers, Jeff Hutchins, April 2022



April 2022 - Lovely visit last week with **Carmena-Kim-Henry '68** in Edmonds Washington- seeing her wonderful new house and having a great dinner with her and Nick. So fantastic to reconnect- we last saw each other in 2016 when I also went out there to teach at the Lakeside School. We talked family, ACS, books, memories, so good.

Ellen Porter Honnet '69



June 2022 - Wonderful visit from **Debra Jan Sibley Roland '68** and her husband James here in Oslo. So much fun and long conversations, and such a pleasure to introduce her to my daughter, son-in-law and grand-daughters. - **Alice Ludvigsen '70**



Alex ter Weele, faculty at ACS and AUB in the early '60s, has just published his latest book. Many of the AUB Community have read and commented on his best seller, "A Family's Flight from Holland During World War Two", but may be unaware of his more recent publications: a book of poetry and one of short stories. The book just released is titled

"Sir Alex Talks Soccer" (and meanders as well into football, boxing, basketball, running, the high jump, golf, physics, chess, mathematics, the Bible and Napoleon's wars!). All of Alex's books can be found by Googling his name or the title of any of his books; all are available in hard cover, paperback, Kindle, Nook and eBook, and on the author's website at alexterweele.com. Alex now lives in Rappahannock, Virginia. He has enjoyed reconnecting with many of his ex ACS and AUB students who on reading his books have contacted him and launched a new friendship.



Alumni Council 2023 - 2025 Election

Sixteen candidates have agreed to stand for election and, if elected, to serve as a representative on the Alumni Council, the group of alumni who help guide AA/ACS. The election process is governed by our bylaws. The candidates will be elected to a three-year term beginning January 1, 2023.

You must vote for at least one nominee; there are 16 names listed alphabetically. Names preceded by * indicate a current Council Member. Voting will be open from July 15- July 31. You may vote for ALL CANDIDATES by checking this box: Or you may simply say, "I VOTE FOR ALL CANDIDATES." EMAIL YOUR BALLOT TO: jeff@jeffhutchins.com

*** Yasmin Agha, Class of 2004, Resides in Beirut, Lebanon**

After graduation from ACS Yasmin established her own business. Cookie Dough, a boutique and active parenting community, has been in operation since 2009. Yasmin is recognized as a pioneer, regionally and internationally, for innovation and excellence in the field of baby and children's luxury goods and services, and parent workshops. Yasmin seeks to renew her service to the alumni association, which she has been a member of since 2017, recently serving a term as Vice President. She is passionate about ACS and believes that her commitment to the ACS mission, her position as an influential entrepreneur in the region, and her strategic networking skills make her a valuable member of the association.

*** Ramsey Barghout, Class of 2012, Resides in Miami, FL, USA**

My name is Ramsey Barghout, and I am part of the graduating class of 2012. I lived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for 11 years before moving to Beirut, Lebanon for High School where I attended and graduated from ACS. Thereafter, I was accepted into my top college choice Northeastern University located in Boston, Massachusetts. I moved to Boston and lived there for 5 years where I studied Civil Engineering with a focus in Construction Management. After graduating, I accepted a job with Suffolk Construction where I was based in Miami, Florida to work on the Seminole Hardrock Casino.

I currently still live in Miami and visit my friends and family in Beirut at least once a year when given the opportunity. ACS was a big part of my childhood and has formed my foundational base to help me grow academically and socially. I would like to give back to ACS by helping to raise funds, growing the ACS network in the United States, and maintaining a warm community of alumni. I joined the Alumni Council in 2019. I look forward to serving another full term as a member to assist in any way that I can..

*** Jay Bruder, Class of 1974, Resides in Alexandria, VA, USA**

Jay attended ACS for four years between 1967 and 1974. Jay has served on the Alumni Council since 2007 and also served for a few years in the more distant past. In addition to organizing several small ACS events around Washington, DC starting in the 1970s and Honolulu, Hawaii in the 1990s, Jay acted as the Reunion Chair for the 2007 Reunion in Washington, DC. More recently he served as the chair for the Strategic Planning Group of the AA/ACS and as an advisor to the 2016 Boston Reunion and he is assisting the 2022 reunion in Baltimore. Jay is a past President of the Alumni Association.

Catherine "Cat" Essoyan, Class of 1973, Resides in Apeldoorn, Netherlands

I was at ACS from 6th through 12th grades, from 1966 to 1973. I am a proud member of the Great Class of 1973! I have attended several recent ACS reunions, in Boston and Salt Lake City and I plan to be in Baltimore this year. I am married to René Hopen who was in my graduating class in ACS, and it is wonderful that we share this part of our history. I am still in touch regularly with many ACSers and have special memories and a deep, abiding connection to Lebanon and ACS.

I did a BA in Literature at Yale and a MA in Middle East studies and conflict resolution at Harvard. Professionally, I have worked on conflict resolution and social and political participation primarily in the Middle East and Maghreb region. I spent 10 years with the American Friends Service Committee working on Lebanon Relief and Reconstruction following Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. I ran the Quaker Legal Aid Center in East Jerusalem for three years in the 1980s and later ran the Middle East international program. René and I were married in late 1991 and I moved to Apeldoorn, the Netherlands in 1992.

I worked for Oxfam Novib for almost 30 years, first as a MENA program officer, later as MENA Regional Director and since 2015, heading Thematic Units focusing on Governance and Financial Flows and on Conflict and Fragility until my retirement in April 2021. In both my

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Alumni Council 2023 - 2025 Election Continued

AFSC and Oxfam roles, I had the opportunity to visit Lebanon regularly. My family and I attended the ACS reunion in Beirut in 2005. We have two sons, Bjorn (29) and Kai (26), and it was special to show them around Lebanon. I am deeply concerned about the current situation in Lebanon, economically, politically and as a result of the Covid pandemic and the Beirut port blast. I support ACS and am grateful for the important role it has played in my life. René and I visited ACS when we were last in Lebanon in September 2018 and had a tour of the school. I believe my strong connection to ACS and to Lebanon and my concern for their future, and my strong network of friends among ACS alumni would equip me well to contribute as a member of the ACS Alumni Council. As I am now retired, I would also be able to devote the time required to fulfil this role. I would be grateful for your support.

Amelia Fellner Seaton, Class of 1977, Resides in Punxsutawney, PA, USA

I am from Punxsutawney, PA. I traveled with my father, an Army Warrant Officer who served as the Operations Specialist for the Defense Attaché Office in American embassies. I went to high school in Korea, Malaysia, and Lebanon until the civil war escalated and my mother, my siblings and I were evacuated to Greece until my father finished his tour in Beirut and Austria. I graduated from AIS in Vienna. I settled in Alexandria, VA, where I worked for non-profits. I am newly retired, living in Pennsylvania, and caring for my mother.

Glen Grubbs, Class of 1971, Resides in Salem, NH, USA

I was born on in Somerville, MA December 13, 1953, the second child of Glen Grubbs of Erie PA and Jean Honnors of Boston, MA. I attended schools in Andover, MA until December 1967, the middle of my freshman year. My family then moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. On January 4th, 1968, I started at ACS halfway through my freshman year, as a boarding student. After my first two months of crying and writing letters to my mother that I wanted to come home, I settled in and learned to LOVE boarding school and ACS.

After summer vacation in Jeddah, mostly spent with my ACS classmate Sean Baker, I went back to ACS for my sophomore year.

Unbelievably, life got even BETTER! My classes were interesting and informative, the teachers that served as proctors in the dorms were fun and helpful. I played sports, went to school dances, and dated a few girls, ALL of whom I am still friends with 54 years later! Two important events in my sophomore year occurred: I broke my sternum in Phys Ed class, and I went to the Prom with Gina Canarella as Sophomores. We were tricky enough to each go with a Junior as a date, and then switch seats as the Prom started. There is photographic evidence of this, as OUR photo was utilized in the Al Manara yearbook for 1969.

After the summer of 69 (the Summer of Love, Woodstock, and a Walk on the Moon), I returned to ACS for my Junior and Senior Years. Things rapidly changed for me and for ACS. Boys grew their hair long and had facial hair, fashion changed from Carnaby Street to Refugee jeans and Pea Coats from the Beirut Souk. Teachers were in their early 20s with long hair of their own. I was a Dorm Monitor. Innocence and the ignorance of living overseas had been shattered by the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy the previous year. One of my friends, a brilliant boy named Bjorn Hopen, took his own life. Five of my friends were arrested on the streets of Beirut and exiled from the country. I was busted for drinking Almaza in my dorm room.

But I GRADUATED in June of 1971! As a matter of fact, I had improved my grades to the top ten percent of my class, and was accepted to 5 reasonably prestigious schools in Pennsylvania: Carnegie-Mellon, Duquesne, Bucknell, Lafayette, and Lehigh! I chose to attend Lehigh University. After a year of partying, and therefore failing, I transferred to the University of New Hampshire, as my parents were in the process of moving back to the States.

I stayed in touch with dozens of ACSers over the years through the Triennial reunions, but my real breakthrough socially came in 2010, when I joined Facebook. I decided to have "regional" reunions on the years that ACS had no reunions. The tradition has now grown to 8 separate ACS BBQ/Reunion weekends, and hundreds of ACSers have been to my house in Salem, NH over the years. At the behest of Linda Handschin '68, I have taken on the responsibility of updating the Potrzebie mailing list every quarter (and more, if needed).

I want to serve on the Alumni Council to help keep the memories alive for so many of my classmates and dear friends. We aren't just Third Culture Kids, we are ACS Third Culture Kids, a hard distinction to point out to others. But WE KNOW what we shared.

*** Donna Harms-Hansen, Class of 1974, Resides in Andover, MA, USA**

In 1972 I was starting my junior year while my family was living in Tripoli, Libya. Having survived my sophomore year at a school in Switzerland, in a town of 250 including the students, the landing in Beirut was monumental. Looking back at that time, I realize the impact

Alumni Council 2023 - 2025 Election Continued

it made on me which is why I accepted a nomination with the Council in 2019 and am hoping to continue. ACS, and the opportunities that were afforded me in Beirut and Lebanon, was such an important part of my formative years. Think of the clubs, organizations, sports groups ,the opportunities to visit different regions of the country; the people from different countries and cultures, the International Relations Club working on the school building near Maidoon. Mixed in were the challenges of the Yom Kippur battle and the various curfews from the beginnings of the civil turmoil. These experiences in Lebanon were important notches in my life story.

I attended the first ACS reunion in 1981 in Washington, DC and several more since, enjoying the chance to reconnect with friends from the past. When I was approached to coordinate the 2016 ACS Triennial Reunion in Boston, I did not hesitate. The committee worked to put together a successful event that drew 310 people from all over the world. In fall 2020 When my fellow classmate from both Switzerland and ACS offered to coordinate a Baltimore reunion, I let her know she could count on me for whatever experience I could bring.

I retired from public service as Assistant Director a local Recreation Department and began new position as a grant writer and database administrator for a local homeless shelter that same year. I truly believe my experience growing up with different cultures helps tremendously in my interactions with members of a very diverse community. I so enjoy reading the ACS social media posts knowing that the lives of new generations of students continue to be impacted by the opportunities ACS still affords its students.

Daniel Harrich, Class of 2018, Resides in New York City, NY, USA

I'm Syrian/Austrian (Syrian on my mom's side, Austrian on my dad's side). As I was growing up, my dad's job with the UN took us all around the world to a very wide range of places (Kosovo, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Lebanon to mention a few). In 2010, he accepted a posting to Damascus, Syria, which was the first time that his work coincided with somewhere my family could call "home" (because my mom is Syrian, settling in Damascus longer-term would have been great, since she would finally be living in the city she grew up in, and wouldn't have to compromise being away from her parents because of my dad's job).

Unfortunately, our plans to stay in Damascus longer-term were short lived, and in 2012 we were forced to move to Beirut because of the ever-deteriorating situation. While that move to Beirut was initially supposed to be temporary, we ended up spending 6 years in Lebanon from 2012-2018. I joined ACS as a 6th grader, where I started in January of 2012. Fast forward six years later, I was graduating with the ACS class of 2018.

Post-ACS, I was lucky to be accepted for my undergraduate degree at Columbia University, as part of their Dual BA Program with SciencesPo (the program allows us to do our Freshman/Sophomore years in France at SciencesPo, and then our Junior/Senior years at Columbia, eventually graduating with 2 BAs, one from each institution, in just 4 years). I'm currently in my last year of the program at Columbia, and will be working full-time in New York as a consultant next fall!

I made friends for life at ACS, and I am still in contact with basically everyone in my year (and the immediate years above/below). A desire to give back to ACS and to help integrate newer generations of ACS grads into the broader Alumni network underscores my desire to join the Council, and it would be amazing if this is something that resonates with you as well. Above all, I'm excited and humbled to be considered for the Council.

*** Gina Kano, Class of 1973, Resides in Seal Beach, CA, USA**

Gina graduated from ACS in 1973 and went on to AUB, where her father was Dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture. Born in Syria of an American mother and Syrian/Lebanese father, Beirut was home for 20+ years. The family left Lebanon, and Gina transferred to Mount Holyoke College, where she got an AB (advanced undergraduate degree) in Economics. She lives in Southern California, where she owns a business coaching franchise. Previous to this endeavor, she had a highly successful career in retail, direct mail, and marketing, ending as SVP of Client Services for one of the largest sales and marketing companies in North America. She was on the planning committee for the 2013 San Diego reunion, and has remained active in the ACS community.

*** Margaret "Mug" Kelberer, Class of 1973, Resides in St. Paul, MN, USA**

I am a lifer from ACS, having gone to ACS from first grade through 12th. The school and the experiences living in Beirut have shaped my life as it has for all who went to school there. I am currently semi-retired, after having spent the last 5 years working in international schools in Madagascar and Trinidad.

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Alumni Council 2023 - 2025 Election Continued

I have enjoyed the last nine years I have been on the Alumni Council. Serving keeps my heart close to ACS. As a continuing member I want to offer continuity as the make-up of the council changes. The council is faced with the task of keeping in step with the changing face of alumni, many of whom are stretched across the globe. I hope to help with this task by working with younger alumni, seeking innovative ways to grow the membership, to keep the association healthy.

Evelyn Lambert Saunders, Class of 1971, Resides in Park City, UT, USA

I am a graduate of ACS, class of 1971. I attended ACS in elementary school and then, due to my father's job, I was in school in England for two years, returning to ACS for 7th grade and remaining a student there through graduation in 1971. It was an enjoyable time with lifelong friends developed. I was aware at the time that I was getting a good education, but I didn't realize what a superior education I received until I was older and able to compare it to other schools. I feel fortunate, to this day, about getting a first-class education that sent me on my way to a good college and, subsequently, law school.

In 2019, I traveled to Beirut and made a point of visiting the school. Obviously, there were big changes to the demographics of the student body, as well as physical changes to the campus. At the same time, it was all so familiar and welcoming. As I wandered around the school campus, I came across a class of children from the elementary school. They were so happy that I had to smile with them. It drove home the point that the school was still an enjoyable and safe place for children to get an education.

With the political problems plaguing the Middle East and surrounding areas; with some children not able to even get an education and others being subject to intense indoctrination posing as education, I concluded that ACS offers a unique perspective to the students that attend. It allows a free flow of ideas that comes with a western education, making it even more important that it survive. I also developed a greater interest in the school and its outcome.

With the renewed interest in the welfare of the school and seeing it prosper, I am willing to put in time on behalf of the Alumni Council. I helped with the 2019 school reunion in Salt Lake City, putting in lots of hours as requested. I also set up an online Facebook site, American Community School Friends, that mostly focuses on Beirut and Lebanon so that alumni can enjoy the place where they went to school. It has some news of ACS but is not intended to compete with the official ACS Alumni Facebook page.

Thank you for your consideration.

*** Alice Ludvigsen, Class of 1970, Resides in Oslo, Norway**

I was born in Saida, Lebanon, in 1952 and lived there until I left after graduation in 1970. Attended ACS as a boarder from 8th grade in 1965. I was asked to join the Alumni Council last year, after I had become editor of the alumni newsletter, The Diaspora Potrzebie, so am quite a new member.

*** Jeanie Mullin, Class of 1973, Resides in Houston, TX, USA**

I had the opportunity to attend ACS in the early '70s for my junior and senior years while Beirut was at its zenith. My dad was working for Aramco in Dhahran, SA so I was a boarding student, although I was also good friends with a lot of day students. It was during that time at ACS that I made some of my best lifelong friends. I think we all agree living in Beirut and attending school there was a highpoint in the lives of the majority of us.

Although I am retired from my first career at The University of Texas Medical School - Houston, I consider myself semi-retired because I will continue in my volunteer efforts. In addition to experience in office management, I worked at the medical school in executive administration. I also had the opportunity to manage UT Office of Alumni Affairs prior to a restructuring of that office. It was enjoyable and fulfilling working with alumni of the school.

As we all know, the council faces many challenges in the future. One big question is how to increase the number of members in our alumni association as the older class numbers start to dwindle? This seems to be more difficult as so many graduates are going off to colleges in Europe and the Middle East. How do we bridge this gap between the alumni living in the States and those in Europe? Do we need to start planning reunions for those alumni living and working abroad? This is an area I would be most interested helping to develop. As an enthusiastic supporter of the ACS Alumni Association, I would like to continue to be part of the Alumni Council.

Alumni Council 2023 - 2025 Election Continued

Leslie Parker, Class of 1977, Resides in Mesa, AZ, USA

We moved to Beirut in the summer of '71, and I started at ACS in the 7th grade, along with my 2 sisters and younger brother. My sisters graduated in '73 and '75. In the fall of '75, we returned to school after the civil war had started, and the student body was reduced to half the normal size.

By late October, there was another mass exodus away from Beirut, and what once was a student body of around 1000 students (K-12) became a student body of only around 50 students. There were 8 left in my grade (class of '77), and my younger brother (class of '80) only had 4, I believe.

We stayed and persevered until March of '76 when the bombing came over to the west side of the city (where we lived, right next to the lighthouse - Al Manara). My brother and I went with our father to the roof of our building and saw bombs landing right near ACS and the Druze village we walked through every day to and from school. Still, at that moment, I did not want to leave.

My father decided he would send the 3 of us back to the States while he stayed and continued working for AMIDEAST. I was able to return once, during the summer of '78, and was recruited by ACS to teach summer school 8th grade Math to 4 students who had not passed that year. I have not returned to Beirut since then, though I still consider it "my home."

I stayed away from reunions for many years, working on a marriage that was detrimental to my mental health, though I had not known this at the time. I was treated by my sisters to attend the 2013 reunion in San Diego. There, I was awakened again to who I was and where I came from. The experience was life changing.

Since then, I have moved to the Phoenix area and built a life with my son, away from my prior toxic marriage. I have also reconnected with so many ACS alumni, and feel so much more complete in my life. I have a great appreciation for what the alumni association can do for and with the members. Though I have a busy work schedule - I would willingly devote as much time as possible to help the association.

*** Leonard Smith, Class of 1967, Resides in Highland Ranch, CO, USA**

I grew up in Denver, Colorado, Amman Jordan, Colombo Ceylon, Khartoum Sudan, and of course Beirut. I attended American Community School as a boarding student graduating in 1967. My family evacuated to Rome in June 1967! I joined the US Army in 1969 and was discharged in 1972. Then I attended Metropolitan State University graduating with a degree in Accounting.

Professional Experience:

Internal Auditor, Staff Accountant, Accounting Manager and Controller
Founder of Mile High Information Systems, and Telesis Consulting
Non-CPA Partner with 13th largest CPA firm in USA.

Volunteer Experience:

Past Treasurer Alumni Association, ACS Beirut
Regional President, Institute of Management Accountants
Volunteer Coach – Rocky Mountain Venture Capital Club
Treasurer of the local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America
National Committee Member, Vietnam Veterans of America

*** Elizabeth "Betsy" van den Berg, Class of 1974, Resides in Washington DC, USA**

Elizabeth "Betsy" van den Berg was a Boarding Department student at ACS from 1972-74 while her dad was stationed in Rhodes, Greece. She was an active member of the Drama Club and Choir, and served as a dorm prefect during her senior year. Betsy previously served on the alumni council (the Board of Governors) for a period of six years, leaving only when her job duties increased, and rejoined 3 years ago at the Salt Lake reunion. During her tenure she also served on the 2007 Washington, D.C. reunion committee, and is Chair of the Baltimore 2022 reunion committee. She is Professor in the Theatre Arts Department at McDaniel College in Maryland, and lives in the suburbs of D.C.

Alumni Association of the American Community School at Beirut, Inc.
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ACS, Beirut - Alumni



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut

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