

the diaspora potrzebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School of Beirut, Lebanon

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Interview with a Centenarian

by Bruce Minturn

Belle Dorman Rugh '25 celebrated her one-hundredth birthday on June 8, 2008. Born and raised in Beirut, Belle's father was a doctor and professor at AUB (at that time, known as the Syrian Protestant College) and her mother was a central figure of the American community there. Belle's great grandfather, Daniel Bliss, was the founder of AUB. Belle and her five brothers attended ACS for their entire primary & secondary educations, with the exception of one year in the United States. Though all her brothers were long-lived, Belle is now the sole surviving member from her generation within her Beirut family. She was interviewed by her former student and longtime friend, Bruce Minturn, in Seattle, Washington.



Belle Dorman-Rugh '25. Photo courtesy of Bruce Minturn .

Your mother was born in Lebanon, your father in America. How and when did they meet?

When my mother was sixteen, she accompanied her mother on a trip to America. It was during that trip that she met my father, who was four years older than she. They met in the church community, but didn't get romantically involved until several years later, when she was a student at Vassar and he was a medical resident at Harvard.

How did they end up back in Beirut?

My father had always been interested in an overseas career. Given my mother's background, a post in Lebanon was a natural fit. They married and went to Lebanon in 1902.

You started school at ACS in 1914. What is your first memory of the school?

I didn't want to go. I wept and screamed all the way on that first day. I was afraid of Miss Thornton, who was the principal of the school. She wore glasses with a bar across the top that made her appear to be frowning, though she never was. She was, in fact, a very nice person. But she taught arithmetic, and that was against her because I never was good at that.

Given your family's prominence in the history of AUB and ACS, were you and your brothers accorded any special status at school? There were six of you Dormans, after all, and it was a small school.

Yes, we could pretty much do as we wanted! (Laughter) No, that's not true. It was a very egalitarian place. And my brothers wouldn't have had it otherwise.

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What was the campus like then?

The school was a little stone house just inside the hospital grounds. The grounds were about a city block, maybe smaller, with a stone wall around it. I remember little Lebanese kids climbing up the wall to see what we looked like and what we were doing. They were curious about games we played.

What games did you play?

Outdoors we played basketball and a game called Prisoner's Base, where we would chase each other about. We played it so enthusiastically that one day I ran into an orange tree and was knocked out. I was carried inside by an older boy, which I thought was very romantic. I always regret that I can't remember the occasion, though I still have a bump on my forehead as evidence.

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Editor's

Corner

by Jon Stacey '61

We're still begging for articles and photos (did you notice that the December 2007 Pot was only eight pages long)? On the other hand, our thanks to **Harriet Wahl-Cowper '73** for convincing Bruce Mintern to write the cool lead article in this issue!

UPCOMING FEATURES

Alumni Profiles of various **AA/ACS Governors**

How I Found AA/ACS *compiled by* **Jon Stacey '61**

Diversity Committee Activities by **Connie Scott-Walker '76**

Reunion News by the **AA/ACS Reunion Committee**

Reports from ACS by **The ACS Staff**

Ideas for columns, features, and articles? Call me! Want to write an article? Call me collect! Phone (503) 524-8915 up to 9:00 p.m. Pacific (Oregon) time. The address of our opulent editorial offices is 11935 SW Robbins Drive, Beaverton, Oregon 97008. Fax is (360) 838-2550. Our office's vast network of computers has a hacker-proof email address of <diaspora@teleport.com>

Were all the students at the school American? Were they of similar economic means?

There were a few English and Lebanese students. But it was mostly Americans and we all seemed about the same economically, because I never knew a rich little girl my age. Or a poor one, really. If I did, I probably didn't know they were rich or poor. They were just so-and-so.

Where did your family live during the school year?

In Ras Beirut. Ras means "head" in Arabic. In north Beirut, I'd say. That's where we grew up. It was near the American University, so it was a nice walk to school.

Who was your best childhood friend at the school?

Mary Francis Bacon '25. She was a dear friend for years and the one I walked home from school with. She lived in a very dramatic place, right next to the lighthouse. The light would flash into her room and go around and around and come back again.

What would you and Mary do after school?

Well, of course, the first thing was to rush out of school as fast as we could. Then go straight to somebody's house to play. And the next order of business was to eat something. Like ginger snaps.

My mother made wonderful ginger snaps. You couldn't ask for anything more than that. Then we would play in the back yard. Beirut back yards were lovely places to play. There was usually a flower garden with a pool in the middle. And the pool would have a little stone seat around it where you could eat your cookie and enjoy life.

How did you travel and explore locally? Did your parents load up a car with you kids?

Not if we could avoid it. My father was not fond of cars. And cars were not that common. And they would always break down. That wasn't much fun. So we mostly hiked. Used our legs. There were the five boys, and me, so we walked everywhere.

(continued on page 11)

Reports from ACS

by Laila Faris-Alamuddin '62, Director of College Counseling

Each year, at graduation, seniors who have excelled according to given rigorous criteria receive prestigious awards. These awards are given to students only if they meet the criteria. The faculty nominates students and then votes for the nominees in confidential sessions in May of each year. It must be noted that in addition to meeting the required criteria, the students must have exhibited a sustained commitment and an appropriate standard of discipline, accepting and upholding school policies, and exhibiting a high level of academic, social, and behavioral integrity, particularly in Grades 11 and 12. This year, the following seniors were selected for the respective senior awards:

Sophia Ab Halim '08 for the Fine Arts Award. The senior has a GPA of 3.5 or higher in the Fine Arts courses taken at ACS and has shown outstanding effort and achievement in one or more of the Fine Arts. Sophia is in a class of her own when it comes to art, and she has used her art in the service of her community. The award was presented to her by her father, the Ambassador of Malaysia. Sophia will pursue studio art in college, attending the Temple University in Japan

Gebran Haddad '08 for the Blair Harcourt Award. This senior has distinguished himself academically, with a cumulative GPA of 3.7, an athletically in badminton, soccer, and swimming. Gebran consistently exhibited leadership skills, good sportsmanship, and courteousness. The recipient of this award receives an \$800 check from the Blair Harcourt family in honor of their son who was at ACS in the 70's. Gebran will be attending Oberlin College in Ohio, and plans to ultimately go into medicine.

Katherine Malouf '08 for the Citizenship Award. For her exceptional contribution to school and the community. Katherine has been a moving force in our human rights program and its affiliated "sister school" club. Behind the scenes, she has spent countless hours working for the school ACS has adopted in Southern Lebanon, as well as the original sister school adopted in Sri Lanka. It is no surprise that she wants to major in developmental economics, probably in the UK, and plans to work for NGO's upon graduation.

Samer Nuwayhid '08 for the Walter Prosser Award. Walter Prosser selflessly served for years on ACS's Board of Trustees. He embodied what is best in a liberal education. He was a problem-solver, a well-read and cultured person, and a life-long learner. This award goes to the student who exhibits this spirit. Samer received this award because he has a high academic standing and has demonstrated exceptional application of his learning in contribution to school and community. Samer is known for his quiet service and understanding manner. This recipient receives a \$800 check from the Prosser family. Samer will be attending AUB, majoring in civil engineering.

Alumni Living in Lebanon

The alumni association newsletter, *The Diaspora Potrzebie*, would like to solicit stories, vignettes, and articles from you! Please write us about your family, friends, travels, education, and your experiences at ACS! Please send inputs to <diaspora@teleport.com>

Letters to the Editor

You may not remember me, but we've corresponded from time to time. I wrote the book *Lebanon's Child*. The end of your article ("Acculturation") touched me deeply, as I still feel something of an outsider, even 69 years after leaving Lebanon. Having been born there, I'm probably more deeply attached to the country, rather than just to ACS -- though the school had a profound effect on my life. I wrote the continuation of my life story for my children and will attach parts of the introduction, which might be of personal interest you. Indeed, home is where the heart is. I said this about TCKs in a speech I gave once: "As third culture kids we grow up as outsiders in a foreign country and often find ourselves still outsiders when we return to the home country. We can live anywhere, yet belong nowhere. We experience God as universal, as the creator of many cultures besides our own. We develop coping strategies to deal with the (sometimes extreme) parochialism experienced in U.S. schools and society."

-- Anne Byerly-Moore '40

Regarding the photo "Party Time" on page 3 in the March 2008 *Pot* -- actually, it was taken at our Senior Prom, class of 1954. If I remember correctly, **Babs (Barb) Lucher '56** was the singer chosen for our Prom orchestra. I did not know her well, but do remember I was mesmerized by her amazing eyes and her beauty -- and loved her singing the popular songs of our day. We all thought she would become a pop-singer, as she was good at it!

-- Gail Hohlweg '54

I had to laugh when I read the latest *Potrzebie* (June 2008) and saw on page 12 a photograph entitled "Junior High Play." These days I have trouble recalling the names of students I have had in classes or friends when I meet them on the street, yet I could remember the name of the play (*One Mad Night*), the plot, and the names of almost everyone of my 8th grade classmates in the picture! **Najla Kurani '58**, a long-time classmate and friend, who was not in the photograph, called me from Virginia to ask if I had seen the newsletter and we had a great time reminiscing. Thanks for giving us both a chuckle!

-- Polly Penrose-Colby '58

After letting the March 2008 issue lie on the floor near my recliner for a week or so, I picked it up and began to read through it. Well! I began to read your essay ("Acculturation") about your background and was thoroughly swept up into your narrative! Wow! Thank you, Jon, for your wonderful story! We probably never met, since I was a BD student (from Baghdad) for only one year (1956-1957), but you brought the place alive again to me through your essay! Since you had lived in Eritrea, perhaps you met Tom Hauk somewhere along the line. (He came to the BD from Ethiopia in 1956.) Also, perhaps you knew Mike Huston (also from Baghdad) and Rob Tyson (whose parents were in Amman at the time). We were the terrors or the second floor! I missed the reunion in Seattle in 1991, but you, no doubt, met some of these terrors there! Anyway, Jon, please know that this guy (from that long-ago time) sure did appreciate your essay, and I want you to know that I certainly also recognize your ability to write! Bravo to you, Jon Stacey! With affection (and a tie that binds).

-- Steve Pierce '58

I finally just read your excellent story ("Acculturation") of the cultural imprint left by your growth years in the Middle East. You eloquently express the feeling and the development process of most of us. We were incredibly influenced by our experiences then. No one really understands this but those of us who grew through it. I am just digesting the March *Pot* even though it has been on my desk since it arrived. I haven't been able to get past the picture of **Barbara Lucher-Graham '56** on the front page. I feel such a loss of a wonderful friend and the only ACS contact I had in Nevada. Barbara used to call or email out of the blue. I loved that. She was such an interesting person and a wonderful character. She truly enveloped her friends.

-- Diane Showalter-Hooley '61

Alumni Notes removed at editor's request

Bittersweet

by Alice Trembour '71

I've been a long-time member of the alumni association, and have been wanting for years to write something for the *Pot*. I've hesitated because, although I remember my time at ACS with fondness, my two years there were a very difficult time for me.

I arrived as a 15-year-old freshman in September 1967, after the '67 war with Israel. My parents and my sister lived in Tabriz, Iran, where my father ran an American cultural center for USIA. I had grown up all over the world, and had a special feeling for the Islamic Middle East, and so was looking forward to exploring another country on the Mediterranean rim. I settled into dorm and school life, but when I went home for Thanksgiving I remember feeling such a rush of relief to see my parents that I surmise I must have ignored my homesickness until it was safe to feel it.

I had never lived in the US for long, so though I sounded like an American, I certainly had had no cultural experience as a typical American teenager. It seemed to me that most of the boarding students had much more American experience, perhaps because their families lived in American or Western enclaves in the various countries where they were based. I knew a few day students, but not many. So I struggled to fit in to the intense mix in the girls dorm of fashion, weight, hair, skin, boy, and rock music consciousness that pervaded the atmosphere all day, every day. We were a highly hormonal lot on a crazy emotional roller-coaster ride, and the adults who were in charge of our floors mostly didn't have a clue as to how to handle us.

I remember struggling all the time to fit into dorm life, which I nevertheless loved, but in which I always had the feeling I had to prove myself cool enough. In retrospect, I was a textbook case of trying to accommodate to peer pressure, and because I was living in a dorm with strangers far from my family, I never had any respite from my efforts to fit in. My grades were bad, and certainly teachers tried to help me academically, but I wasn't having an intellectual problem; I was having a large emotional problem.

In any event, I made it through my freshman year, went home for the summer, and returned ready to go—or so I thought—for sophomore year. I think I started smoking cigarettes during that summer, and back at ACS I proceeded to break enough of the smoking rules in the course of that year to not only be suspended, but finally to be expelled. Through my behavior I was definitely asking for help from somewhere, but the sole adult response was disciplinary. I think if one adult had genuinely attempted to help me figure out what was wrong, I might have tried to articulate what was up. Nowadays, our public awareness of teenage issues is much stronger, and no doubt today some professional would have noticed my floundering, but I don't remember that there was anyone trained for such observation at ACS at that time. Plainly, the disciplinary steps the school had in place to address repeat offenders had no effect on me and my behavior, so home I went.

You can imagine my humiliation, as well as my parents' embarrassment. They decided to take early retirement so I wouldn't be in boarding school anymore (in any case with Nixon as president, my father was fed up trying to represent American objectives overseas), and we moved to Boulder, Colorado, where I finished high school, barely sliding through with something like a 2.5 GPA.

I hated being in the US (if you are picturing a generally maladjusted teenager, you've got the picture), and I certainly wasn't ready for college, so I spent a year on a kibbutz in Israel. There, I

had to fend for myself again, and this time I was ready: I worked hard, learned Hebrew, traveled everywhere, made friends, and I began to leave behind my disaffection and contrariness. I must have realized that I could either sink or swim, and I could do either on my own terms; no one was going to stop me either way. The people in the kibbutz responded to lazy volunteers by ignoring them, and rewarded hard workers with acceptance and friendship.

At the end of that year I wasn't ready to go home—wherever that was—so I went to (West) Berlin to start college, since I spoke German fluently. Suddenly I was making straight As, studying art and art history, living happily and successfully on my own in an apartment with other students. After three years there I finished up at the University of Denver, which accepted all my foreign credits. I even did an MA in philosophy and started a PhD program at the U. of Colorado. Pretty soon I dropped out of that and began a 10-year career in journalism and publishing (where else would a philosophy major go).

Now I've lived in the same house for 23 years, just outside Washington, DC, and none of my three children has ever lived in a house other than this one (except for one year we spent in India). I'm startled that my children have grown up so differently from the way I did, because ideally I would have wanted them to have had the same early life I did. I have no regrets; in fact, if I had my childhood to do over again, I would choose to grow up in exactly the same way, except that I would wish for a slightly less stressful ACS time. I know that although many kids do fine in boarding school, I didn't happen to be one of them; I was too young and insecure to be sent away from my family. Over the course of my 23 years of parenting I've told any parent who would listen not to consider sending their kids off to boarding school, unless there were absolutely no other option.

As a result of my years in the Middle East, including the two years in Beirut, I have a warm connection to Middle Eastern culture and people, and a regard for Islam. Partly because I've read every issue of the *Pot* for so many years, I know the rest of the ACS alumni share this happy relationship to that part of the world, and this understanding and tolerance is standing us all in good stead in the face of the current public hysteria about terrorism and its perceived relationship to Islam. I am grateful for this gift, because I will never view Islam with suspicion, as so many of my countrymen do. As well, with the passage of all these years and the clarity that has come, I see that my ACS experience, painful (and fun) as it was, is nevertheless part and parcel of my openness to that part of the world and its people and religion.

I can be reached at <trembour@gmail.com>.

New Books I

The 2008 international IMPAC Dublin Award winner -- the biggest for fiction published in English -- goes to Canadian author Rawi Hage for "De Niro's Game," a debut novel about two childhood friends growing up in Beirut who, when they come of age, must decide whether to stay in their troubled city or abandon it for an expatriate existence. Hage was born in Beirut and lived through nine years of civil war in Lebanon. The book was chosen from 137 titles, nominated by 162 libraries in 45 countries.

Alumni Profiles

[Editor's Note: We've been running a series of profiles of the Governors of AA/ACS. Here are two more.]

by **Farrah Haidar '94, Governor, AA/ACS**

Since leaving ACS, I moved to the United States and lived in California and Boston. Currently, I own my business doing marketing consulting for technology companies. I received my Bachelor of Science (Business major) from California State University at Hayward, CA, and my Masters of Business Administration from Boston University.

My travels have mostly been back to Lebanon to see family, but I have visited the Cayman Islands, Germany, and a few cities in the U.S. My hobbies including writing, reading, pottery and travel. I'm married to Abdullah Daoud, and we have no kids yet!



Photo courtesy of Farrah Haidar '94 .

by **Connie Scott-Lindstrom '76, Governor, AA/ACS**

I was half asleep, half watching one of those *PM Magazine* shows one evening in Boston back in spring of 1982 when I heard an interview begin with a guy with a familiar name. The show's host was talking with Ben Wagner, president of the student body, I think it was, at Dartmouth. *Ben Wagner?!?* I bolted upright and started to really pay attention. It couldn't be my old friend Ben Wagner, ACS Class of 1977, could it? But there was no mistaking the head of straight blond hair and that Brooklyn accent. After the show, I dug out my address book and found the last address I had for Ben in New York. I dialed his number and couldn't believe my luck when, eventually, I was able to track him down through his family and talk with him. We had both grown up in Brooklyn, New



Connie Scott-Walker-Lindstrom '76 with her usual happy face. Photo courtesy of Connie Scott-Lindstrom '76.

York, so that was our bond in Beirut. We talked about college and what we'd been up to for the past seven or so years and then Ben told me about the Alexandria reunion that was scheduled for that summer. I couldn't believe it!!! Thanks to Ben I was going to reconnect with ACS.

Two things were unfortunate: I never did talk to Ben again and I couldn't attend that first Alexandria reunion because I already had a plane ticket to fly to Texas to visit my family. But the ball was rolling and it's now more than 25 years, and many incredible alumni reunions, later.

My first day of school at ACS was in January of 1972. I was in the middle of 8th grade and had moved, with extreme reluctance, from the friends and school I loved in Brooklyn to what I imagined as some outpost in the middle of the desert. The only good thing, in my view, was that I had begged and pleaded and finally convinced my 88-year-old grandfather to move with us. Four of us in 8th grade began on the same day: Afi Keshvari, Dion Stanbury, Patty Walker and I. I remember wearing a brown turtleneck and skirt with a beaded leather belt and feeling really awkward and out of place. I didn't want to be there.

By sometime in 9th grade I couldn't imagine leaving Beirut. What a transformation! I loved it! I played alto sax in the band and was on the swim team and in the drama club and I felt as though I belonged and that I now knew almost everyone in the school.

I never truly got used to the disturbances and the fear of getting caught in the crossfire of Israeli bombings, skirmishes between the government and the Palestinians, or the civil war. Being trapped for about a day in the basement of one of the buildings in our Bir Hassan neighborhood with my family, a number of our neighbors, and a frightened Palestinian family from the nearby camp was petrifying. Another time when the school was forced to close early my stepfather and I attempted to drive home but were turned back by a masked gunman running across the road ahead of us near Kuwaiti Circle. We ended up at the home of a friend in the mountains and my mother and grandfather were stuck home, ducking from gunfire that exploded our utility room toilet and a bullet that came in our living room picture window and ricocheted off the wall above the couch where my mother and a scared neighbor had just been sitting seconds before. Driving to school on

the wrong side of the road to hide from snipers was a tactic my mother used to keep us safe.

I remember a picnic with friends from the Class of '77 -- George Miller, Leslie Parker, Oona Campbell, Ed Fattal, Jamie Farah, David Ferwerda, and George's little brother Martyn on the AUB campus that was cut short by sniper fire. We had to hide behind rocks and trees for protection. When we first got to Beirut I angrily told my mother and stepfather that we'd probably be killed living in this crazy danger zone and all I wanted to know was how soon could we leave. But by 1973 I didn't care so much about the danger. I just wanted to know how long would we be able to stay?

The end came for me on a day in early February of 1976. It was my senior year and the civil war had taken its toll on my family, as well. We were moving to London in the middle of another school year. No senior prom, no graduation ceremony. Luckily, I did have enough credits to earn my ACS diploma, a treasured piece of paper. Only a handful of my classmates were there for the June graduation ceremony and I would have given anything to be there with them. No other life experience is so vivid in my mind as those precious four years in Lebanon.

Once in London, I got a job working at the first McDonald's there, in Haymarket. Quite a few former ACSers either stopped in for food or also had jobs there, especially the local students from the American School in London and ACS. If I'm not mistaken, **Chris Maloney '76** worked there for a time. I seem to remember seeing our old art teacher, **Ray Ruehl (Fac)**, there as a customer. I worked at Haymarket, and at McDonald's High Street Kensington and Strand, on and off until college began for me in August, 1976, and then during school vacations for several more years. Even my old English teacher, **Angie Doane (Fac)**, visited me while she was in town.

At Simmons College, in Boston, I majored in communications and then took my first job at New England Conservatory of Music. My days on the *Aleph Beth* obviously affected my career choice. The Boston area was a hotbed for ACS alumni sightings. While **Debbie Dakouzlian '76** was visiting from Chicago we ran into our former social studies teacher and *Aleph Beth* advisor, **Jeff Stuckey (Fac)**, on the street near Boston University. I still swear that I saw teacher **Bob Foss (Fac)** from aboard the "T" in Copley Square. I happened to be on a city bus once with **Nada Hakim '76**, and **Yasmeen Husain '74** was a student at Simmons, as well. There are several other connections with ACSers that I seem to remember but my 50-year old memory is not what it used to be.

From Boston I traveled to Redondo Beach, California, where I continued to work in publications for a local university. It was while I was living in California that I took over *The Diaspora Potrzebie* from **Peter Gibson (Fac)**. **Karim Cherif '75** and I relived our "Catty Comment" days working on the newsletter together for a few years, until I handed the job over in 1991 to the incredible and long-lived editor, **Jon Stacey '61**. My future husband and I moved on to St. Louis, Missouri, and then, in the spring of 1991, we moved again to Shaker Heights, Ohio. I stopped working and had my two daughters, Katie, 16, and Maddie, 14, over the next several years. After a short detour to Asheboro, North Carolina, we returned to the Cleveland area in 1997 and I've been here ever since. After my divorce in 2001 I went back to school for my master's degree and teaching license in early childhood education. I'm currently substitute teaching in the Shaker Height City School District, which allows me the flexibility to travel to see my old college boyfriend and now fiancé, Eric Lindstrom, with whom I reconnected via "Googling" in 2005. By the time you read



Connie Scott-Walker-Lindstrom '76 with daughters Katie (left) and Maddie (right). Photo courtesy of Connie Scott-Lindstrom '76.

this, I will be Mrs. Connie Walker-Lindstrom, as we're getting married on 8/8/08!!

As for my family, my stepfather passed away in 1995 and my mother, Sylvia Foster, still lives in Normal, Illinois. My dear old grandfather died in 1986. He lived to be almost 103. My overprotective German Shepherd, Lubie, lived to travel with my family from Beirut to England (and six months quarantine!) and then on to Georgia, Texas, and Illinois. **Anne Seidel '77** will be happy to know that he mellowed out in his old age, although that would probably have been little consolation to her when he bit her back in his puppy days!

(Connie Scott-Walker '76 — now Connie Walker-Lindstrom — apologizes for any errors and omissions due to memory lapse! She continues to live in Shaker Heights, Ohio.)

[Editor's Note: Connie's reference to "the incredible and long-lived editor, Jon Stacey '61" might be interpreted as a blatant attempt to get paid for writing an article for the Pot. However, as a former Editor of the Pot herself, she is well aware that we only pay five piasters per paragraph.]

New Book II

"The Failure of the Colleges of Education, the Public Schools and Parents: A Brief Explanation of the Causes and the Solution," by **E. Stephen Pierce '58**. Available from www.PublishAmerica.com.

Dr. Tichenor

I was sorry to hear of Dr. Tichenor's passing. He and I recently corresponded about his book, *Go East, Young Man, Go East*. He wrote of being, "constantly surprised at Providence's lavish hand." Perhaps it was providence that landed me in front of his desk, and not the principal's, in the spring of '66. I committed an indiscretion that could have had exacting consequences (I went to the I.C. Fair). But the "CAT" simply cautioned me. This teenager was struck by his tractability, his fairness, and above all, his kindness.

-- Jo Parks Wunderlich '67

A Reunion of Friends

by Patrick Hinds '56, Governor of AA/ACS

Fourteen members of the Class of 1956, three members of the Class of 1957, one member of the Class of 1959, and nine non-ACS spouses gathered in Carmel, CA over the long weekend of May 8 - 12. They came from all over the country for a chance to renew old friendships and catch up with the goings on in the lives of their friends. I think the recent loss of one of our dearest classmates, **Barbara Lucher-Graham '56**, was a sobering reminder of just how tenuous our grip on life can be and galvanized her friends from these classes into action with a determination to not miss an opportunity to gather with old friends.

The Class of 1956 members and spouses were Bill '56 & Adele Brown - Vancouver, WA; Bill '56 & Nancy Crays - Lafayette, LA; Norm '56 & Carol Gray - Santa Cruz, CA; Patrick '56 & Evelyn Hinds - San Dimas, CA; Katherine Jackson Ullman '56 - Orinda, CA; Ken Lebsock '56 - Gaithersburg, MD; Bob '56 & Kathy Lowenthal - Ponte Verde Beach, FL; Jim Lipman & Judy '56 Mandaville-Lipman - Portola, CA; Diane McWood Nowland '56 - Nevada City, CA; Don Randall & Carey '56 Overton Randall - Ft. Meyers, FL; Bob Sample '56 - Denver, CO; Jack '56 Sommer & Diane '56 Renfer Sommer - Cornelius, NC; and last but not least John Woods '56 - Oak Park, IL.

The Class of 1957 members and spouses were represented by Don '57 Emmerson & Carolyn '57 Holm-Emmerson - Stanford, CA and Myles Jones & Susan '57 Kellenberg-Jones - Grass Valley, CA. The lone representatives of the Class of 1959 were Larry Birdsong & Gladys '59 McWood-Birdsong - Nevada City, CA. Members of the Class of 1956 refer to these folks as their "faithful lackeys."

Judy Mandaville-Lipman '56 and her husband Jim hosted the gathering at their lovely vacation home in Carmel. Fourteen of the early arrivals dined at the Pacific Edge Restaurant at the Highlands Inn on Thursday, May 8 enjoying a splendid sunset and a sumptuous meal. Someone (Bill Crays) claimed to have witnessed the Green Flash, but I think it was the Martinis. Jim Lipman convinced me that the Green Flash is an illusion similar to the false image experienced when you stare momentarily at a bright light and then close your eyes or are plunged into darkness. But that may have been the Martinis also.

On Friday, while other attendees were trickling in, some went shopping, some went sightseeing, and four of us (Bill Crays, Jack Sommer, Bob Lowenthal, and me) did something useful and played golf. Modesty prevents me from saying who had the lowest score and won the most money, but I will give them another opportunity to win it back. Friday evening, we rendezvoused at the Lipman's and traveled to Trappy's Restaurant near the Monterey Airport for a delicious dinner and a lot of visiting among the friends. Afterward, we gathered again at the Lipman's and discussed a wide range of topics: the failure of American Foreign Policy in the Middle East, expeditions to Mongolia in search of the tomb of Genghis Khan, the chaos of modern air transportation and its impact on the Mile High Club's membership decline, how much Vermouth vapor should be permitted within 10 cubic meters of the Martini glass in order to make a truly dry Martini, and finally, whether the Green Flash is real or an artifact of the Martinis. These discussions raged on throughout the weekend.

Saturday was spent sightseeing, hiking at Pt. Lobos, or shopping. Saturday evening featured a BBQ at the Lipman's place, a delicious feast of tri-tip steak, salad, beans, and artichokes. The



Judy Mandaville-Lipman '56 and Jim Lipman, hosts for the Big Event. Photo courtesy of Pat Hinds '56.

rest of the evening was occupied by reminiscing and, of course, continuing the discussions of Friday night. The reminiscences naturally centered on our shared life at ACS during those magical 1950's in Beirut and memories of our schoolmates and classmates that have left us -- Barbara Lucher-Graham, Sharon McMullen-Adams, Virginia Moore-Wantling, Ken Wantling, Sparky Passmore, and Frank Irving come to mind. (After this reunion and as a sad postscript to this weekend of fun, we learned that Mike Woodruff of the Class of 1956 had passed away. Mike was a lost alum for many years. Sadly, he was found in his passing.)

We brunchd together on Sunday at the Forge in the Forest Restaurant in Carmel. The table was decorated with flowers in the ACS School colors (blue and gold in case you've forgotten). The restaurant printed a special menu for our group. The menu was intended to be titled "A Reunion of ACS Friends." However, it came out "A Reunion of ACS Fiends." So, we welcomed each other with fiendish delight and pledged eternal "fiendship." After brunch, the gathering began to break up, some returning home on Sunday, others on Monday, and the diehards on Tuesday. But we all parted with a renewed sense of comradeship and a vow to gather more often - before we get old. It was a memorable weekend. May we have many more visits.

Alumni Living in Lebanon

The alumni association newsletter, *The Diaspora Potrzebie*, would like to solicit stories, vignettes, and articles from you! Please write us about your family, friends, travels, education, and your experiences at ACS! Please send inputs to <diaspora@teleport.com>

Bill & Marjorie's Big Adventure

by Bill Tracy '53

We may have given you our new address or phone number, but just to make sure all bases are covered, here's an official notification.

Elizabeth was here when we arrived to help us greet the moving van the following morning and begin unpacking. Of course she brought garlic, potatoes and herbs from her garden as a welcome gift. We'll drive down to her farm in Idaho at least once before we leave for niece Erica Tracy's wedding in Austin in late June. Our pets Macintosh and Amira settled in after a few nervous first days in their new environment and we've located a house sitter to look after them while we're in Texas.

Street address: 4221 E. 39th Ave; Spokane, WA 99223

Tel: (509) 413-1627

E-mail (remains the same): billsolar@comcast.net



Spokane River Falls. Photo courtesy of Bill Tracy '53.

We live in the South Hill area, about two miles from downtown and near the retirement facility which we plan to become our eventual home. The old residential streets of the city are shaded by maples, with parks and yards blooming with lilacs. The newer areas on the fringes are set in pine forests.

I've attached a shot we took our first Sunday in Spokane, when the Spokane River was in spring flood from the melting snow pack in the nearby mountains. The falls are the reason the town was founded in the 1800s, so the pioneers could take advantage of water power to grind their grain etc. They are located smack in the middle of downtown, with a large, lovely park alongside the upper river and within a city block of the Macy's and Nordstrom department stores and a big multiplex movie theater. Spokane declares itself to be "Near Nature; Near Perfect."

AA/ACS Diversity Committee News

As we go to press, "Summer in the City" get-togethers are planned to occur (almost simultaneously) during the August 21-23 timeframe in Beirut, Abu Dhabi/Dubai, Denver, Boston, London, New York, Washington DC, Austin, Dallas, Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle. Reports and pictures (hopefully) in the December *Pot*.

(Interview with a Centenarian – continued from page 2)

What are some of the places you would go?

My father would always have a proposition for a Saturday, and he'd say, "Anybody want to go to such-and-such a place?" And there was only one possible answer: Yes! If you weren't enthusiastic, he didn't like it. But we were enthusiastic, because he always had an interesting suggestion. We'd go down to the sands and look for ancient coins. Or we'd go to the "little pines," where small pines were growing near the edge of the beach, and identify interesting bits of pottery. We often went to a place we called the "flint factory" where, in prehistoric times, people made flint arrowheads and such. There's quite a technique to it, which my father tried to teach me.

Your father was amazing. I remember you once told me about a blood transfusion he gave you.

When I was a child, maybe a teenager, I had a blood disease. I can't remember what it was. But I do remember that I got a transfusion from my father, who was very excited about it. Few transfusions had been done in Beirut at that time. He was on one table and I was on another and we were connected by tubing. My father was fascinated and kept saying, "Belle, look at this. Look at what they're doing." But I didn't care for it. I didn't want to look. I just didn't like to see the blood. I didn't like to see myself punctured.

But you started feeling better?

Yes, it was quite dramatic. It was almost immediately I started mending.

Your brother Harry was a scoutmaster. Were you involved in scouting?

I was always a loyal Girl Scout. I attended every meeting. We had a camp that was very informative, as the boys had a camp. I loved it. I remember the British Girl Guides (their version of Girl Scouts) and was very impressed by them because they had epaulettes and little fluttering ribbons on their shoulder. We American Girl Scouts had a pin, and we earned merit badges. But I don't remember what they looked like.

You are one of a very few Americans who can remember her first ride in an automobile. That was in Lebanon, wasn't it?

It was in the village of Shemlan, where we lived during the summers. I couldn't have been more than twelve years old. My mother and I were walking along the road when a British army officer with a flag on his car stopped and asked us if we wanted a ride. I remember sitting in the back seat holding on as tight as can be and all I could think was, "If I ever get out of this thing, I'll never get in one again!" It was very scary because I could see the ground shooting around behind us. I was glad to get back on solid ground.

These days, young people listen to music all the time, using electronic devices and earphones. Did you have any way to listen to popular music in Beirut in the 1920s?

We had records, which we could play on a phonograph. We used to have a lot of dances at our house and everyone would bring their latest records to play.

(continued on page 12)

You graduated from ACS in 1925. How many students were in your class?

There were six of us girls who graduated together.

How many boys?

None. But that was just bad luck. I think if you asked me, I'd say we were underprivileged because there weren't enough boys at the Community School.

You and your brothers all went on to prestigious universities and noteworthy careers. Tell us a little about your brothers.

My brothers all went to Harvard. Gerald and Danny became doctors. Gerald became president of the American Medical Association. My brother Harry was a minister. He would preach the most imaginative sermons. And John was in the diplomatic service. He was a funny and delightful person. David, who always enjoyed reading, became a librarian.

John spent much of his career in the Middle East, didn't he?

Yes, he did.

And soon, your nephew, Peter Dorman '66, will be president of AUB.

Yes, I'm very happy about that. His father was my brother, Harry '22.

Where did you go to college?

I went to Vassar. And I enjoyed that a lot, because I'd grown up with brothers, and loved them. But it was so exciting to be in a college where it all belonged to me. And I could go wherever I wanted, and anything that was going on was my own activity.

While you were at Vassar, did you go back to Beirut for the summers?

Yes. We all did. My parents were very anxious to keep in close touch with us, so we all came back to Lebanon from America.

What did you do upon graduating from Vassar?

I returned to Lebanon right away because I had found a job teaching English at Al Madrisi Ahlihah, an Arab girls' school, and later I taught at the American Junior College for Women. I had a wonderful time. I lived at the college and got to know the girls well. They were mostly Lebanese girls and a few girls from Palestine. One of my most brilliant students was Anissa Najjar, a Druze girl who was very proud of her heritage and who later became a driving force in the international women's peace movement, as well as the founder of an organization that helped village women earn their own money and independence.

While you were teaching in Beirut, was that when you met your future husband Douglas?

Yes. I can't remember our first meeting, but it must have been at my parents' house. A visit to their house was one of the first things a traveling young American would do in Beirut, because both my mother and father were so knowledgeable about the country. Every Sunday afternoon, we had visitors calling on my parents. And they liked Douglas right away.

Why was he in Beirut?

Douglas had grown up in China and all he cared about was China. When he finished college, he was fortunate enough to find interesting work in China, but it wouldn't start for another year. Douglas was looking about for things to do that year when he talked to a professor in New York City. The professor suggested he spend time at AUB while waiting to go to China. And so Douglas was soon on his way to Beirut.

I've always felt grateful to that professor, though I never met him.

While waiting to go to China, Douglas met, courted and married you. What was it like to leave Lebanon for China?

It was very hard leaving Lebanon, because that was all I knew growing up. But the fact that Douglas had been to Lebanon made all the difference. As did the hope that we'd someday return to Lebanon.

Did you return there?

Yes. We were in Beirut from 1955 to 1956, and again from 1963 through 1967. We had children by then. Our older daughter, Molly, went to ACS during the first stay, and our younger daughter, June, attended ACS for part of the second stay. We later transferred June to Al Madrisi Ahlihah because we wanted to expand her horizons.

Of all your childhood memories of Beirut, do you have a favorite?

That's a big question. One of the strongest memories I have, not a favorite one, is of World War I, and the starvation time, when there was not enough food for people. I remember waking up at night and hearing the cry of people, "Jaw'an! Jaw'an!" which is Arabic for "Hungry! Hungry!" And it was very hard to hear that and go back to sleep. I've never forgotten those days when people were starving in Beirut.

A happy memory is the day the British came into Beirut. That was so exciting, because things had gotten very bad with the Turks. But when the British came in, that day I'll never forget. My mother and father said it was OK to go downtown because the troops would be marching in that day. We could hear them way up the street, the sound of the bagpipes. They were Scots. We could hear them, "they're coming, they're coming!", so we all rushed over to see them when they came. And there they were, swinging around the corner with their kilts going like this and the bagpipes playing, and the... Oh, I think that was one of the most exciting moments in my life. Because the British had come and the Turks were out. The Turks were gone and that meant a lot.

So did things get better after that, the hunger, once the British were there?

It changed that day! My mother remembered that as the day everything changed. Up until that day, you could hear the cry of children, but the Turkish occupation prevented anyone from taking action. After that day, everyone was taken care of. It wasn't that the officials did that, but my mother said that everybody on the street took care of who was hungry, shared whatever they had, and from that time on we never saw a hungry person on the street.

And the British would share their rations. One time, my brother and I went over to the campus to see what was going on, and there was a British army truck parked on the side, and we kids went over to talk to them. Just to hear somebody speaking English was exciting, and I didn't know this Englishman. He climbed up on the

hood of his army truck, and sat there with his legs crossed over, and talked to these two little kids, my brother and me, and we were just so excited to hear him talking English. And then he opened a can of “bully beef” they called it. Corned beef. The British always called it “bully beef.” And he opened a can of that and he cut off a couple of slices and asked us if we would like some. We were so excited. He gave us each a piece and I remember Harry and I ate it. I thought I’d never tasted anything so good in my life. And I still feel that way about bully beef. Bring me a can of bully beef anytime. I find it most delicious.

You wrote three enchanting books about American children growing up in Lebanon. What inspired you to write them?

When my daughter Molly was a young girl, I wrote a short story for her about children in Lebanon. After she read the story, Molly wanted to know what happened next, and what happened after that, and so forth. That became my first book, *Crystal Mountain*.¹

Would you like to return to Lebanon for a visit?

Oh, I would. I think I would. But going back to a place after so many years. You never know. It might be a great disappointment in some ways, but other things would be wonderful. The people would be wonderful, and certainly the food would be wonderful. The American University would be so much changed. And I might not be able to speak the same language anymore.

Your younger daughter June was in Beirut two years ago and was trapped by the war.

Yes, she was visiting friends when the war started. I was very worried about her, but she managed to get out after a harrowing week or so. We worry about our Lebanese friends, though. During the war, Anissa Najjar refused to leave Beirut. This is typical of her bravery; she has a very strong spirit.

I recently showed you some satellite photos of Beirut and Chemlan on my computer. (Google Earth) What did it feel like to see your old haunts from that perspective?

I’ll never forget that. It was magical. It is still like a dream to me, that I actually saw that. And looked down from way up there. I wish my mother had seen that. She could have identified so many more places.

Like many centenarians, you may be asked the next question frequently: To what do you attribute your long life?

Sheer goodness, of course! (Laughter) Not on my part, but on my family’s.

You mean goodness, in the form of good genes?

No, no. Good people and a good time as had by all. I’ve always had a good time with my family.

Do you have any advice for your fellow alumni about maintaining their physical and mental health?

Well, the first one is keep breathing. (Laughter) That one I learned from my father, who was a doctor. And keep walking. A lot of people just ride in the car from place to place, which is not nearly as interesting as when you walk. When you walk, you find things and meet people.

I have always been impressed by your curiosity about almost everything. I think of it as childlike, in a good way.

It is childlike because it’s basic. It’s what you grow up with.

Thank you for letting me interview you, Belle.

It was a privilege to talk your ear off, Bruce. I hope you’re not exhausted! And to my fellow ACS alumni, let me say, “Salaams,” and love to you all.

Author’s Note:

My first college class in 1979 was English Composition 101, taught by Belle Rugh. On the final day of class, after all other students had departed, I thanked Belle (“Mrs. Rugh” to me then.) and told her how much I enjoyed her class and how dismayed I was that it was over. I wondered if we might continue our discussions of writing and storytelling outside of the classroom, and she happily agreed. Thus began our long friendship. Over the years, I have heard so many tales of Beirut and Chemlan that I sometimes feel as though I, too, attended ACS in the early days of the last century.

A remarkable coincidence connects me to ACS in another way. About five years ago, I visited my friends Bill and Harriet in Portland, Oregon. Bill was my boyhood best friend, but I had only recently met Harriet. For some reason or other, in a conversation, I mentioned Belle. Harriet asked if I was referring to Belle Dorman Rugh. “Yes!” I answered, surprised that she knew of Belle. Harriet explained to me that she had read Belle’s books as a child, and that she had lived in Beirut and attended the American Community School. It was a wonderful discovery, and when Bill and Harriet came to Seattle, we visited Belle together. Some time later, Harriet told her father, who had been in the diplomatic service, about meeting Belle Dorman-Rugh, and he said that he had once been colleagues with Belle’s brother, John Dorman ‘30.

It was Harriet Wahl-Cowper ’73 who suggested to Jon Stacey ‘61 that I interview Belle for the Pot. Jon, in turn, kindly suggested many good questions that would be of interest to Pot readers. My thanks to them both, and to Belle.



Belle Dorman-Rugh '25 and Bruce Mintern. Photo courtesy of Bruce Mintern .

¹ Her other books are *The Path Above the Pines* and *The Lost Waters*.

More Pictures from the 1950's



ACS Faculty in 1954 – Dr. Bassett, Phyllis Albright, and G. Nassar.
Photo courtesy of Tambien Albright '61.



Bobbie Edgecombe '54. Photo courtesy of Monroe Pasternack '53.



ACS Playground in 1964. Photo courtesy of Tambien Albright '61.



ACS Student Council -- 1950's Photo courtesy of Tambien Albright '61.



ACS Grades 4 -6 in 1952. Photo courtesy of Tambien Albright '61.

Girls's BD in 1973!!!



Top Row: Yasmeen Husain '??, Gail Kirkpatrick '73, Patty Falconer '75, Anita VanElderden '74, Patty Oakes '74; 2nd Row: Tracy Carson '75, Lucie Lisle '76, someone in trees(?); 3rd Row: Kate Worthington '74, Donna Harms '74, Judy Butler '73, Mrs. Chami (Fac); 4th Row: Lynne Tucker '76, Kathy Slay '74, Lisa Ebert '74, Lynda Carson '75; 5th Row: Danise Sowles '74, Mikiko Mori '75, Sam Sontag '74, Delinda Curtiss '73, Dawn Quiggle '75, Miss Horton (Fac), Betsy van den Berg '74, Lisle Scott '76, Wendy Houwer '73, Melinda Lord '75; 6th Row: Randi Young '73, Ruth Harms '73, Becky Ulissey '74, Linda Martin '73, Mary Ann Whitney '75 (sitting), Hilary Bell '73; 7th Row: Wendy Clutter '75, Lisa Thomason '73, Rachel Brown '75, Ginny Vogwill '73, Nisa Rachie '73, Mrs. Matthews (Fac) & child; Bottom Row: Jenny Nicklas '?? & David, Marjorie Adams '75, Lisa Butler '76, Jooske Stil '73, Laila Wolle '74, Liza Hallman '73, Mug Kelberer '73. Missing: Pegi Ball '73, Kathy Bird '74, Karen Dace '74, Ann Hofmann '75, Joni Madany '73, Elaine Miller '74, Jeannie Mullin '73, Elisabet Degaarden '??, Susan Ottley '75, Sandra Ottley '76, Shelley Thomason '74. Photo courtesy of Judy Butler-Perez '73.



The Tram at BabEdriss in 1951. Photo courtesy of Monroe Pastermack '53.

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