

# aoshs Quarterly

The American Overseas Schools Historical Society  
704 West Douglas Avenue, Wichita, KS 67203-6104

Summer 2015

[www.aoshs.org](http://www.aoshs.org)  
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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Gayle Vaughn-Wiles

As many of you know, the winter and spring in Downeast Maine has been extremely challenging. Currently, we have two feet of snow on the ground and it is melting slowly. I hope that the snow will melt before the annual meeting in July! Dean and I live in a wooded area one mile from Route 9, where we have several unpaved roads. That means as the snow melts, we graduate to what is known as "mud season". Many people ask, "Are you having fun yet?" My immediate response is, "You betcha!"

I am ecstatic about the support and cooperation I am receiving from the office staff, volunteers, board, Brats, and the membership. I conduct a conference call with the office staff each week in order for us to discuss maintenance, technology, membership info, donations, community outreach, archives, and other interesting topics. We have two faithful volunteers who have been inventorying and assisting with the information needed to enter over 1,000 yearbooks into the database.

The board has many interesting projects, and one that involved several members, was what we called, "Betty Ellis Project". You will read more about it in this issue. The Brats have made valuable contributions to the "Q" and to various funds. Speaking of funds, I cannot thank the membership enough for the donations we have received for various funds within the last 10 months. I am behind on the thank-you notes, because of the influx!

I am not complaining one bit-- I just want those

contributors to know "the thank-you notes are in the mail".

In the fall, we had one of our board members resign. Just recently, the board voted to have Dr. Nancy Bresell to fill the vacancy. We are extremely pleased to have her on our team. Dr. Bresell is transitioning into retirement, and we are happy she has decided to join us at this time.

Needless to say, many things are happening and I have only mentioned a few. I sincerely hope you will be attending our annual meeting in Chicago. At that time, you will get the rest of the story...

See you at the Oak Brook Marriott, July 17 at 9 AM for the AOSHS Annual Meeting!

Meantime, I will continue to thaw out...

### Photo Caption Error: We recently received this message

I received my Spring 2015 AOSHS Quarterly, and saw that there was an error. Lottie McCoy is the person on the RIGHT in the picture of the two sisters. Lottie was at SHAPE when I was there, so I recognize her. I was saddened to hear of her death. We had a good relationship while she was at SHAPE High School. We have seen her several times at the DoDDS Reunions and enjoyed talking to her there.  
H. Clark Marshall (at SHAPE 1970 - 1999)

### QUARTERLY PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

As the name indicates, the QUARTERLY is published four times a year. Material submitted for publication should reach the editors by: January 15; April 15; August 15; and October 15. We'd really appreciate your contribution

# The AOSHS Memorial Program

## Memorial Program

You may purchase a brick or paver in your own name, as a gift in memory of a friend or loved one, or a school. Write to the Memorial Program address or the e-mail address below for the correct order card(s). You may include a 300-word biography and a photo along with the check when you submit your order. The selection of bricks/pavers appears below.

## Memorial Fund

You may organize a fund for a deceased friend or loved one. The fund will be announced in two issues of the Quarterly so that others may contribute. When the fund closes in six months, you will receive an accounting and determine which item the fund will purchase. Write to the Memorial Program address or the e-mail address below to request a Memorial Fund Form, or print the form at [www.aoshs.org/kiosk](http://www.aoshs.org/kiosk); just click on Memorial Program.

## Donate

You may also donate to an already established fund by sending a check payable to the AOSHS Memorial Fund at the address below. Please note the honoree's name on the check's memo line:

**AOSHS Memorial Program, Attn: Dee Edwards,  
P.O. Box 370962, Las Vegas, NV 89137**

[Don't forget to indicate the honoree's name]

## Memorial Program for Alumnae/Alumni

We have had many names added to our Those No Longer with Us paver, where friends or loved ones have sent a donation to remember a special person in their lives, but did not wish to purchase a brick or start a memorial fund.

Though this began as an educator remembrance, several of those recognized are alumni. Because of the increase in donations for this fund, we feel it appropriate to create a second paver specifically to recognize alumni. If friends wish to remember a deceased former student, send the honoree's name, school, and year of graduation (if appropriate), and it will be included in alphabetical order on the kiosk page, which can be viewed by going to [www.aoshs.org/kiosk](http://www.aoshs.org/kiosk), then clicking on the Interactive Kiosk link, and following directions.

To remember an alumna/alumnus in this way, send a check payable to the AOSHS Memorial Fund at the address below.

Please note the honoree's name on the check's memo line and include a note requesting that this person be honored on the Alumni Memorial Page

e-mail: [memorialprog@aoshs.org](mailto:memorialprog@aoshs.org)

Note: e-mails must include AOSHS in the subject area

Type of Bricks and Pavers Offered In the Program	Size (in inches)	Characters/Line (includes spaces)	Maximum Lines	Total Characters (includes spaces)	Cost
Ceramic Brick	4 x 8	15	2	30	\$100
Ceramic Paver	8 x 8	15	5	75	\$250
Medium Granite Paver	8 x 8	15	5	75	\$500
Large Granite Paver	16 x 16	25	11	275	\$1000
Premium Granite Paver	24 x 24	35	17	595	\$2500

## MEMORIAL FUNDS

### First Announcements

**DAVID MILLER BENSEN -----January 29, 1931-September 12, 2014**

David Bensen, a native New Yorker, joined the US Navy after graduation from high school. When he left active duty, Mr. Bensen earned his BS in Elementary Education and MS in Elementary Administration from Hofstra University. He taught elementary school in Uniondale, NY, prior to a 27-year career with the Department of Defense Dependents Schools. He was Principal in schools in Turkey, Okinawa, Germany, Morocco, and Japan. Later, he worked in the DoDDS Superintendent's Office in Japan and Korea. In 1991, he retired to North Carolina. David taught GED classes for Central Carolina Community College, volunteered with the Chatham Education Foundation and the American Red Cross during his retirement years. David loved to travel, and his many collections attest to this fact. He was an avid woodworker and always had at least one project going in craft shops on military bases around the world. Later he worked out of the "Right Angle Woodshop" in his garage in Farrington Village, Pittsboro, North Carolina. He was the "go to guy" for anyone who needed lamps, chairs, or just about anything fixed. David Bensen is survived by his wife of 55 years, Vidabeth, son Michael Bensen, daughters Beth Bensen-Barber, and Kim Mischke, and six grandchildren.

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After receiving his BA and MA in elementary education, Warren Van Zee worked for school systems in Washington before joining the Department of Defense Overseas Dependent School System. He and his family moved to Europe, serving for 31 years in a variety of positions. His early positions included teacher/counselor at Kaiserslautern ES, Nellingen ES, and Patch Barracks Schools. He was Principal of Oberammergau and Murnau Schools, and Curriculum Advisor at the DoDDS Superintendent's Office in Wiesbaden. He also served as Supervising Principal in Giessen, Assistant Superintendent in Naples, and Principal at Mannheim High School. Dr. Van Zee's last position with the DODDS schools was that of Superintendent of Schools in Spain and Italy. He received his PhD in Education from the University of Southern California while living in Giessen. After retirement, Dr. Van Zee served on the Port Orchard, WA, City Council, and was active with the Kiwanis and other local civic organizations. Warren is survived by his wife of 64 years, Joanne, daughter Camilla Dombrowski, and son, Kenneth Van Zee. He was very proud of his two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

## AOSHS Member Betty Ellis Has Moved by: Lani Allanson-Donoho

Our good friend and fellow DoDDS teacher, Betty Ellis, moved to her new residence in Hershey, Pennsylvania on April 1, 2015. A collaborative "labor of love" of family, friends, DoDDS and AOSHS colleagues assisted Betty in her move. One part of the effort, was to identify, pack, and transport memorabilia to be donated to the AOSHS Archives to be placed with the several boxes Betty had already sent to Wichita. Our AOSHS President, Gayle, and Office Manager, Robert, worked together to ask fellow retired DoDDS teachers who live near Betty to go to Betty's condo to help pack boxes. Lesley Lojko and her husband graciously offered to drive to Betty's and spend a day or two packing boxes!

Due to their diligence, they completed-- in just one day--the task of packing 15 boxes of treasured memorabilia that Betty had collected from her many assignments--over 38 years--around the world, including Germany, Japan, the Philippines and Iceland. The next step was picking up the boxes and transporting them to Wichita. Our own AOSHS past-president Scarlett Rehrig has volunteered to drive the precious boxes to Wichita when she attends the Annual AOSHS Board Meeting in Wichita September 10 and 11<sup>th</sup>.

Please write or phone Betty at her address:

Ms. Betty Ellis  
Country Meadows of Hershey  
459 Sand Hill Road Apt. 669  
Hershey, PA 17033  
Telephone: 717 312-8812

## BRATS OVERSEAS MEMORY BOOK SEEKING SUBMISSIONS: By Trisha Lindsey

All right folks, it's that time! This is the official call for new stories and pictures for the Brats Overseas Book Project! We will be gathering stories from ANY Brats from ANY era for inclusion into a series of books that will be generated by areas of deployment. So put out the word, if you know ANY military Brats, Past OR Present--we are seeking their stories! Stories need to be 750 words or less, and pictures need to be 300 dpi or more. There is no limit to the number of pictures you send, but please assure they are copyright-free. Send stories and attached pictures via email to

**bratsoverseas@yahoo.com**. You can look at examples of entries on our website,  
**www.bratsoverseas1.wix.com/bratsoverseas**.

We will email our "Terms of Service" to all who send in stories, so be sure you send your stories from an email address that you will not change, as we will use it to communicate with you. If you have not submitted a review for our first book, *Cold War Memories*, please do so on Amazon.com. It helps to expose our call for stories to other Brats who may not know of us on Social Media.

Co-Editor Yoshika and I can stick to a deadline, follow through on our commitments and deliver a beautifully finished project, so if you missed your chance to submit before, send in your story now!

*Recently, as I was deleting old emails that had accumulated, I ran across a thread of emails that had been sent to me in December of 2013.*

*The Director of my high school alumni group, Jeri Glass of the Berlin Brats Association, had written to me after she received a request from the American Overseas Schools Historical Society wanting to know if she could answer some questions from Noah, a 7th grade student in Maryland. It read:*

"Some young students are doing a project on the Berlin Wall and I felt that you might be a better authority to help them. Would you be willing to answer their questions and shoot them a response, or send it to me and I'll send it to them? Thank you very much in advance, and Merry Christmas.  
Best Regards, Iain Woessner AOSHS Archive "

*Jeri Glass then forwarded the email to me knowing that I had first hand information and was part of the experience of living in Berlin as a military dependent during the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961.*

"Jim, The AOSHS Office has received a request from some junior high students who are doing a project on the Berlin Wall. They thought we might be better to answer their questions. I thought "you" might be better on our end, having been there when the Wall went up. Would you like to answer?

Jeri (Polansky) Glass "

*This chain of letters follows the sequence of events:*

"Jeri, I'd be happy to answer Noah's letter and his questions. I am finding it difficult to explain to a 7th grader about the 15 year history before the Wall was built that affected the issues that led up to the building of the Wall. I'm trying to be short and concise without going into too much detail. As soon as I get it all composed I'll copy you and Iain. Jim"

"Hello Noah. My name is Jeri Glass; I am the Director of the Berlin Brats, the Alumni Association for Berlin American High School. We are (or were) all military dependents attending the American High School in Berlin while our parents were stationed in Berlin from 1946 (immediately after WWII) to 1994 when the school closed.

Iain, from the AOSHS Office, has forwarded your request onto us, thinking we would be in a better position to answer questions for your project. I, in turn have passed on your communication to Jim Branson, our Class Contact for '64. He was in Berlin before the Wall was built, and also was there when the Wall was constructed. He will have first hand information for you. I expect you will hear from him soon. If not, please let

me know...and I will get another to respond shortly. Thanks and Good Luck with the project! All the best, Jeri

P.S. You might want to look at our website (address below) as we bought a "whole section" of the Berlin Wall in 2005, which is on loan to the Museum of World Treasures in Wichita, KS. The whole story to include pictures is on our website. Just click on "The Wall" from the left index."

*This to Noah:*

"Hi Noah, I was forwarded your email from the American Overseas Schools Historical Society and wanted to answer some of your questions about the Berlin Wall.

My name is Jim Branson and I live in North Carolina. I was a young teenager at the time that the Berlin Wall was constructed in August of 1961. My father was in the United States Army and there were many American families living in Berlin at the time that the Wall was erected. I was a sophomore at Berlin American High School and attended the high school with 236 other American kids. We saw, first hand, a part of history that people still talk about today, as you are doing in your Social Studies class.

I think it's great that you and Brennan have chosen the Berlin Wall as your topic for your paper. I'll try to answer your questions as best as I can from the perspective of an American teenager living in Berlin at the time and hope that these answers will help you.

First of all, let me tell you a little bit about what Germany was like after the Germans were defeated at the end of World War II in 1945. The defeated German people had little to say about their government until 1949 when two states were established in what is now all of Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany, was a democracy with a capitalist economic system, like the U.S., Great Britain and France. The other new state was the much smaller German Democratic Republic, or East Germany, a dictatorship with its communist leadership selected by Russian leader Joseph Stalin after World War II in order to make it a Soviet satellite state. Both states in Germany had separate governments and separate leaders until the Wall came down.

With Germany divided in two, the city of Berlin was sitting 110 miles inside the state of East Germany and it was divided into 4 sections after World War II. Three sections were to be run by Allies of World War II: the Americans, the British and the French. The fourth section was managed by the Russians and the communist government that they'd established in East Germany.

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The early days of Checkpoint Charlie

For many years, after the end of World War II until 1961, the Russians wanted control of all of Berlin and tried many things to push the U.S., Great Britain and France out of the city. While West Germany and West Berlin became prosperous under their democratic system, East Germany under the communist government was poor and their people were leaving the country, and the city of East Berlin, to live in the West.

2.7 million East Germans fled to West Berlin from the end of World War II until 1961, when the wall was built. All of the educated people in the East, teachers, scientists and much of the work force left. The Russians and East Germans were upset that all of their best people were leaving, so a Wall was built completely around West Berlin to keep the people in East Berlin and East Germany from leaving.

NOW, TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ...

### 1. Were some citizens in support of the wall? If so, was it the East or West Germans?

I don't think many, if any, of the Germans on either side were in favor of the Wall. The people in the East wanted to have the kinds of things that the Westerners were able to afford and the ones in the West liked the new prosperity that they had earned after World War II and the freedoms that their government gave them. Many families were separated when the Wall was built. Some family members were living on the East side and some were living on the West side. Until the Wall was built, both sides could visit one another freely and move back and forth between East and West.



Brandenburg Gate hours after construction of The Wall began.



The Warnock's (Chuck, Charlotte, Nancy) Dad was flying overhead surveying the construction as it was happening

As I mentioned, both sides had their own established governments. When the Wall was built, they continued to have two separate governments until the Wall came down in 1989.

### 2. Before the Berlin Wall was built, were German citizens in East and West Germany fond of their government?

The Germans in the East really had no voice in their government because it was a dictatorship. Their leaders were chosen by the Russians, instead of being elected. The leader in the East, Walter Ulbricht, was not very well liked at all by people in the East or West. He was the man responsible for building the Wall overnight that sealed off East Berlin from West Berlin and families from one another.

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On the other hand, Konrad Adenauer, who was the West German Chancellor when the Wall was built, was very well liked by the West Germans. He had lead West Germany to prosperity after World War II, and formed very close relations with Germany's former enemies, especially the United States and France. He was also a strong opponent of Communism and disliked the Russians immensely.

The Mayor of Berlin, at the time of the building of the Wall, was Willy Brandt. He was a very popular leader and well liked because of the way he handled the tensions between the Russians and the Western government shortly after the Wall was built. Mayor Brandt and President John F. Kennedy became very good friends during the early days of the Wall. He and President Kennedy both delivered speeches to the Berliners, after the wall was built telling the Berliners on both sides that the Americans would stand by them and help them. Willy Brandt was later elected Chancellor of West Germany and received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Noah, I know this is long, but I hope I've helped you with some of your questions. If there are any other questions that I can answer for you, please don't hesitate to write me again. Hope you do well on your paper! --Jim Branson, Berlin American High School Class of 1964"

*So, for over a year I never got a response back from Noah and did not know if he had received my email, or if anyone had heard from him. Then as I was purging emails, I thought I would follow up with Noah and see if he had received my email and to see*

*how his project had gone.*

"Hi Noah, I recently came across the email I sent to you in December of 2013 when you were writing your paper with Brennan on the Berlin Wall and wondered how you did on your paper? I had not heard anything back from you or from the American Overseas Schools Historical Society on whether or not you had ever received my email and how your paper came out. I hope you did well. Drop me a note and let me know how you did. Thanks, Jim Branson, Berlin American High School Class of 1964"

From: Noah To: Jim Branson Date: Thu, 5 Feb 2015

"Hi, it's good to talk to you again. My friend and I got an A on the project. Thank you so much for showing interest in what we were doing. I hope the rest of your day is great! "

"To: Noah Thanks for your quick reply. I'm so glad that you got the email and that you did so well on your project last year. You have a GREAT day also! You've made mine today!"

*From this experience I see why some teachers continue their careers in education and spend many years teaching young people. The rewards, though sometimes small, fill you with pride and hope in future generations.*

## Meet AOSHS' Ron Harrison

Ron graduated from Kansas State University in 1968 and joined the Air Force. After graduation from Air Force Tech School, he was assigned to Tempelhof Air Force Base in Berlin, Germany. As soon as his wife, Glenna, joined him, she applied to teach at the Berlin American High School. Almost a year later, she was asked to substitute teach for the art instructor for the rest of the year. That fall, they gave her a full time position. During his last year in Berlin, Coach Smith asked him to be the assistant basketball coach, which he accepted.

After the Air Force, Ron worked for several feed milling companies in production management. When the electrical automation era began, he moved to Wichita, Kansas, to be a sales specialist for automation products. In Wichita, he saw an article in the local paper about AOSHS coming here to open a museum. He followed up and found that Berlin AHS had a web site and that Jeri Glass was head of that organization. Jeri was a cheerleader in Berlin AHS when Glenna was the cheerleader sponsor. They immediately joined both AOSHS and Berlin Brats, and have been active ever since.

In 2012, Ron got a call from Jeri and Tina Calo with concerns that the AOSHS office was not being manned and they could not contact anyone at the office. Ron hired a locksmith and broke into the office and has been working there ever since. He is currently inventorying the yearbooks and updating the yearbook library. His next undertaking will be inventorying all of the boxes in the archives to make sure they are accounted for correctly in the computer and organize them in a way that they can easily be researched and located.

## Wheelus Air Base, Tripoli, Libya. 1965-67

I arrived in Libya one hot summer in 1965. With me came our children: Catherine, age 12, Michael, age 8, and Theresa, age 4. We landed in a blazing hot world of brown sand, and were checked by the Libyan police before we were allowed to leave the area. The hot air that greeted me when the airplane door opened was enough to make me want to go right back to Charleston, S. C., but my husband was waiting, so we hurried into his arms.

He took us directly to the NCO Club on Wheelus Air Base. There, I immediately asked for ice water. After one thirsty swallow, I was ready to spit the rest of it out. The children's faces reflected the same surprise and disgust. It was cold water, but the taste was of Clorox. When Ferenc explained that all the water we would use was treated and would taste the same, I was really ready to head home. Instead, we piled into our car and Ferenc headed out to Homs road, where he had rented our house. It was extremely hot. As we drove along the road, I noticed an Arab leaning against the high cement block wall of the base. "Stop, Ferenc. I think that man is sick." I said.

Ferenc stepped on the gas pedal and said, "Don't look at him." But of course I did. And I saw that he was just urinating against the wall. When I made an exclamation of disgust, Ferenc told me it was a common occurrence. At the side of the road, I saw women wrapped entirely in long white sheets--one hand held the cloth open just enough for one eye to see out--so they could find their way. All of the women walked several steps behind the man or men they were "with." Again, Ferenc explained that this was the usual practice. In Libya, women were second-class citizens. A man could have four wives, if he could afford them. No grown woman was allowed to show her face in public. Ah yes, the Arab world.

Our place on Homs Road was small, but adequate. Ferenc hurried to warn me that we were never to leave the shutters unlocked when we were away from the house, and under no circumstances were we to ever take a bath with the bathroom windows closed. The hot water heater used gas and could easily kill us in the tub. More joyful news! 7

Our place was co-owned by two Libyans: Mohammed, who owned the water well and lived behind our place, and Hillal, who spoke beautiful English and taught at a college in Tripoli.

Mohammed had built the house we lived in, and soon after we moved in, he came to the door with a measuring stick and proceeded to measure all the rooms in the house. Then he began to turn our single dwelling into a duplex. He measured, placed concrete blocks on the outside wall of our place and, room by room, created the second dwelling. Within a month, we had new next-door neighbors, the Kish Family. They became our close friends and have remained so always. Their son, Jeff, attended our kindergarten with our daughter Theresa.

Homs Road was part of the only highway that ran across the top of Libya. It was always busy. Truck drivers would honk and sneer at me and at our 12 year-old daughter, whenever they saw our bare American faces in our yard.

The yard was small and the "yard boy" who cared for it was not there to water it. His job was to pull out anything green that might grow in enough to hide scorpions.

I did not understand this at first. But I learned a very hard lesson one evening when Theresa, wearing only her little flip-flops, dug her toes into the sand in the backyard and was bitten by a black scorpion. Ferenc scooped up the scorpion and we drove our screaming baby straight to the base hospital. Because they had the scorpion to identify, she was correctly treated at once. Good thinking on Ferenc's part! But our poor little girl never stopped screaming until after midnight.

Shortly after we arrived in Libya, I found a job as director of the Base Kindergarten. This was the highlight of my time in that country. We were under the direction of the non-appropriated funds organization. Our kindergarten was not financially connected to the Department of Defense Dependent Schools group, but they were very helpful to us. The base motor pool sent busses out in the area to pick up and take home our 100 little students.

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We had two additional teachers, three full classes in the morning session and two in the afternoon.

David Newsome, the U.S. ambassador to Libya at the time, sent his son to our school in a chauffeured limousine. The bus drivers, young men from the base motor pool, loved our kindergarteners. After bringing them in, they would park their busses and stay to play with them until we brought our classes into the classrooms. More than once the phone would ring and an annoyed NCO would ask me to "please remind those drivers to get back to the motor pool. They have other work to do."

I know that those young drivers, Eddie Lloyd and Steve Sandoval, found a taste of home, just being with our youngsters.

There were wonderful Roman ruins in Libya. Sabratha and Leptus Magna were within a short drive of our place. We were told to always go in a caravan of three or more vehicles-- never alone out into the desert.

## DoDDS 1981 – 2001

by Kelley Germaine

I got involved with DoDDS in a roundabout way. I was an executive in account management for an international marketing/advertising agency in NYC. My husband had been teaching for DoDDS at London Central High School in England for 4 years, when he returned to the US, and we met. He had kept his paperwork active unbeknownst to me. He was offered a job in Bamberg, West Germany, at the same time I was being promoted. I had traveled abroad numerous times since childhood, and always wondered what it would be like to live in a foreign country. After a short discussion, (he told me with 4 days of leave left) we decided to try it for the 2 years contract. The two years turned into 20 years for me.

I did not have an educational background, so worked for the colleges at the U. S. Army Education Center as an instructor for BSEP, ASEP, High School Completion and some college level classes. At the end of 2 years, I decided to return to university and obtain my master's in education. It was a long time to complete all of the courses (6 years), while working full time and raising two daughters. They were born in the Bamberg Klinikum-- where no English was spoken!

We moved to Okinawa, Japan the summer of 1989, just before the Berlin Wall came down on November 9<sup>th</sup>. I will always remember that day – it's my birthday! After getting acclimated and known the first year in Okinawa, I obtained an elementary teaching job at Amelia Earhart Intermediate School for 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

We carefully followed these instructions.

In spring of 1967, great changes were taking place in Libya. Muammar Gaddafi challenged King Idris and gained power over the country. The US forces were no longer welcome in Libya.

Thankfully, (and because of the foresightedness of our board members), we had closed the school a week ahead of time. If we had not, our little ones would have been at risk on the busses to and from school. As it happened, they were all safe in their homes when the evacuation orders came.

C130s flew in to take dependents out of danger's way. Some went to Athens. My group went to Zaragosa, Spain. Ferenc told us, "Get back to the states. Do not come back to Libya." I was glad to follow his directions.

Life is full of adventures. I am thankful that this adventure ended as it did.

Jolene Weller Fehér

## Gayle Vaughn-Wiles Memories

My first DoDDS assignment was Okinawa, Japan. I enjoyed working with the students, educators, parents and military community so much until I stayed there 6 years. I thought it was hilarious when military personnel would leave Okinawa, perform a tour of duty elsewhere and return to Okinawa. When they returned many would say, "Are you still here?"

After 23 years I returned to Okinawa as the Assistant Superintendent (1999-2002) and later as Superintendent (2002-2008). I would often say, "I started in DoDDS Okinawa as a sweet young thing. I have returned and at least I am still sweet."



While there, I also taught reading specialty, comp math, and was part of the innovative team that created the "School Within A School" curriculum that started every class with a blank piece of paper and writing utensil-- using text books as reference.

The 12 years in Okinawa were great for all of us. In 2001, it was time to move back to the US so that our daughters could experience the American way of life prior to entering college (one was a high school senior; the other a junior). We did retire early and became involved with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill after our daughters were enrolled. We truly enjoy reconnecting with other DoDDS educators and would not have changed anything, regarding this evolution. As a matter of fact, we (my husband and I) were the ones that had the hardest time readjusting to living back in the US, so we travel every chance we get!

## **DODDS Memories** by Winnane Murray\*\*\*\*\*

Being a part of the DODDS family as a child, and as an adult, was indeed an experience of a lifetime. In both phases of my life, memories are still vivid, and I learned quickly about the importance of tolerance, appreciation of other cultures, living life in a foreign country, and experiencing a "hands on" true travel experience.

I was fortunate as a child to develop the love of travel at an early age. Being a military BRAT, I was able to travel with my parents who took advantage of the numerous travel opportunities available to us. Those travel adventures carried into my adult years, as I never lost the desire to go to all corners of the globe. I knew DODDS would provide that opportunity, and more importantly, educate me further in the value of teaching and living in a foreign country. I felt my DODDS years to be a privilege that would make me realize I was a representative of my country in a foreign land.

With personal belongings packed and shipped, and with suitcase in hand, I set out on what I knew would be the opportunity of a lifetime! I was ready for my teaching assignment in Germany, which was at a small German base called Buechel. There was an American munitions squadron, which was the support for the German base. The school was in the town of Kennfus and had a student population of 38. We had 3 teachers, one of whom was a teacher-principal, a host nation teacher, and an office secretary.

Having taught in a large school district in the US before coming to DODDS, I found the Buechel experience to be unique. With a small student population, our school was able to take field trips on one Mercedes bus! There was a sense of family in a close community of Americans and Germans. I saw the cultural diversity of several of my students and found many had already lived in several countries before coming to Germany.

I lived in the American housing area in the town of Ulmen, so it was considered living on the economy. The stairwell living brought back the stairwell days of my childhood. The large

water heater that hung above the bathtub was something I didn't remember as a child, but knew in order to get hot water I had to turn the knob to give the heater enough time to set the right water temperature. Of course, to conserve energy it was expected once the hot water needed was available, the heater element would be turned off. The Germans were emphatic this "rule" be followed, as well as keeping sidewalks swept or snow shoveled in winter. Each tenant was responsible for keeping his or her area inside and out clean. I found my snow shoveling skills were especially put to the test!

Driving in the region was indeed another memory I won't forget. Maneuvering the windy mountain roads presented a challenge, especially during the winter months. I quickly learned that driving in Germany was not like driving in the US. Being stuck in the snow was not uncommon and hearing the Germans count "eins, zwei, drei" to get my car out of the snow bank gave me a sense of security, knowing they would no doubt come to my rescue again!

After two years at Buechel, I accepted a transfer to Hahn, which was the large support base for Buechel. The elementary school had a population of over 1000! I went from one extreme to another, but both places had their own set of advantages. The one school bus that transported students at Buechel was quite a change from the 30-plus buses at Hahn that provided transportation for the large student body. During my Hahn assignment, I lived in the town of Altla, which gave me more of a sense of living on the economy among the Germans as well as the Americans.

Even though there were differences in the size of the schools and the communities, some things were the same-- DODDS students had an appreciation for their cultures, backgrounds, and differences. They embraced those aspects in their everyday lives, which reinforced what I knew all along. Life is what we make it, and if I made a difference in just one life of a student I taught, and with the DODDS friends I made, I have DODDS to thank!



# aoshs Directory

## Board of Directors

AOSHS Board of Directors August 2014

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## The American Overseas Schools Historical Society

...is a Kansas non-profit organization that collects, records, preserves, exhibits and provides research opportunity about historical memorabilia of the American overseas schools. Members promote global knowledge and understanding of this unique endeavor, thus adding a critical chapter to the history of American education.

This AOSHS Quarterly is published four times a year by the Society to enhance public understanding of the human effort, service, reward, and sacrifice in educating our American children and youth abroad.

AOSHS MEMBERSHIP is \$25.00 annually and includes four issues of the newsletter. Two years for \$45.00. To join, send dues to AOSHS, 704 West Douglas Avenue, Wichita, KS 67203-6104. A membership application form is provided elsewhere in this newsletter for your convenience.

DONATIONS to help preserve the *American Overseas Schools Archives* (AOSA) for posterity and historical research are appreciated and are tax deductible as allowed by the IRS. Donations may be sent to the above address.

READERS are ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT short, factual ARTICLES of human interest regarding their experiences overseas. Articles printed may or may not reflect the opinions of AOSHS. Please submit articles preferably by e-mail to [overseasschools@aoshs.org](mailto:overseasschools@aoshs.org), or by snail mail to: AOSHS, 704 West Douglas Avenue, Wichita, KS 67203-6104.

## The AOSHS Policy

The Directors realize that to obtain all AOSHS objectives:

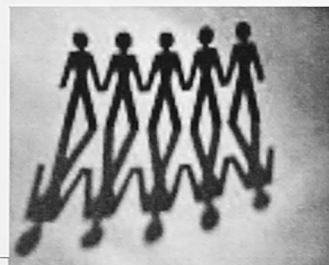
- 1) the strong support of the membership is absolutely essential and must be recognized;
- 2) that although the Society greatly appreciates and recognizes all donations and gifts, it will neither recommend nor encourage its members to obtain the services or products of any company; and,
- 3) the Society will not discriminate on the basis of lifestyle, race, sex, religion, or political affiliation.

## Mary Muehring Circle Honors AOSHS Members' Philanthropy

The Mary Muehring Circle was established in 2002 to recognize philanthropists large and small who have included AOSHS in their estate planning. It is important to provide for the Society's future in a variety of ways. AOSHS honors all those who have made bequests through a will, trust, life insurance policy, or retirement plan. If you wish to include

AOSHS in your estate planning, please contact:

President, AOSHS, 704 West Douglas Avenue, Wichita, KS 67203-6104



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