



aoshs QUARTERLY



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Wichita, KS 67203



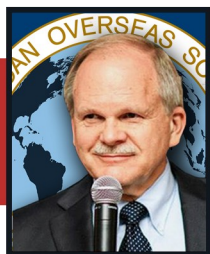
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

FRANK ROEHL

Greetings!

As we remember this past year and begin a new one, the **AOSHS Board** is reflecting on past practices with an eye towards improving how we conduct the affairs of the organization, serve our members, and hold to our vision of **“Preserving the Legacy of DoD Schools Worldwide.”** We believe this needs to be a thoughtful process and will solicit feedback and suggestions from the membership. Please look for a questionnaire in the near future.

Below is a first small step in reviewing our Society’s operating By-Laws.

Board Approves Key By-Law Amendments

During the September **Board meeting**, the AOSHS Board of Directors unanimously approved several important amendments to the Society’s By-Laws. These changes improve leadership

continuity and update the qualifications for Board service.

1. Clarified Presidential Succession Process

The primary change clarifies the process for filling the role of **Board President**, addressing an existing ambiguity in the By-Laws (Article 4, Section 1).

- **President-elect Role Created:** In the final year of a President’s term, the Board will nominate and elect a President-elect from the pool of current Directors and Officers. The **President-elect** will automatically assume the role of President upon the conclusion of the incumbent’s term.
- **Reasoning:** This change ensures a more timely and thoughtful decision regarding future leadership, replacing the former, long-term assumption that the **Vice President** automatically moved into the President role. This also reduces the potential commitment for officers to a more manageable term length.
- **Leadership Continuity:** Corresponding edits were made (Article 4, Section 4) to ensure the President includes the President-elect and all Vice Presidents in the majority of

decision-making actions, ensuring smooth transitions.

2. Updated Director and Officer Qualifications

The Board also updated qualifications for service to broaden the candidate pool and better align with the AOSHS mission (Article 3, Section 7).

- **Director Qualifications:** Directors must now be current members and have been an **American** educator, administrator, support staff, and/or student in one or more **DoD** Pre K-12 schools or other overseas American schools, or have some other substantial connection to the **AOSHS** mission.
- **Officer Qualifications:** A new qualification was added to Article 4, Section 1, Paragraph 5, confirming that an Officer must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older and a citizen of the **United States of America**.

These amendments are effective immediately. Stay tuned for more updates in future “Q’s”!

The AOSHS Board and Staff wish you and yours more than what you wished and a healthy happy 2026!

AOSHS Financial Summary Report

Ron Harrison

	Dec. 2025
AOSHS Assets (Not including building and furnishings)	\$963,196
Reserved Operating Funds (Reserved for contractors, 80% of non-personnel costs, scholarship fund and Endowment Fund)	\$835,944
Non-Reserved Assets (Available for operations & unpaid obligations)	\$127,252
Unpaid Obligations	—
Non-Reserved Assets (After obligations are paid)	\$127,252

Berliners Meet in Manhattan, Kansas

Ron Harrison

The last issue of the **Berlin Brats Quarterly** announced the 2025 Scholarship winners; one of those was **Alex Rieper** who was studying at **K-State in Manhattan, Kansas**. **Ron and Glenna Harrison**, (Faculty 1971-72) noted this and contacted **Jeri Glass**, of **Berlin Brats**, and one of Glenna's cheerleaders, for more information. We found out that, yes, Alex was studying at KSU and his sister, **Amelia Rieper**, (scholarship awardee from 2021) graduated from KSU and is living and working here in Manhattan. This is a three-generation story—Alex's grandfather, **COL Robert Fitton, Retired Army**, and his wife **Mary Alice** served in **Berlin**, 1971-1973. His mother, Tracy (**Fitton**) **Rieper**, was born in Berlin. **Bob Fitton** served again in Berlin in 1985-1988 and Tracy attended **Berlin American High School**.

Tracy married **Bill Rieper** and he served thirty-five years in the Army (COL, Retired). This family had military tours in **Germany** at southern locations. Bill is now teaching at **Ft. Leavenworth**, 2.5 hours away from Manhattan.



It happened that Tracy's parents, Bob and Mary Alice Fitton, were visiting Leavenworth on their way from their summer home in **Wyoming** to their home in **Virginia**. The whole family gathered in Manhattan and had a late Sunday dinner with Ron and Glenna Harrison at a Manhattan restaurant. We enjoyed sharing about old times in Berlin and when people on Facebook talk about living by the duck pond, I now know where it is located and it's marked on my Berlin map.

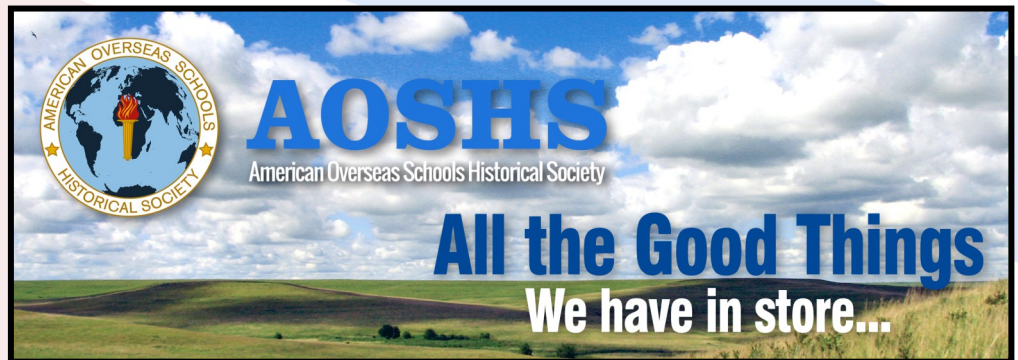
Updating Membership Management for AOSHS

Jamey Hansen

*Disclaimer: At work (my job is in IT and strategy at the **University Of Minnesota**) we're exploring effective uses of AI tools. Writing this update for the **Q** gave me an opportunity to try it. I put in my notes and got a pretty good article of what we're working on.*

We are implementing an upgrade to our membership management tool. This strategic update is designed to improve administrative efficiency, enhance member services, and provide **the Board** with necessary data for long-term planning.

As we transition to this new system, you may notice changes to the membership renewal process and form. We want to assure members that these updated forms are designed to maintain the same ease of use and accessibility as the prior process. A core component of this upgrade is our shift toward a more paperless process. This change will save our dedicated **AOSHS office manager** considerable time and effort currently spent on manual record keeping and sending out membership notices. We extend our gratitude to the dedicated



volunteers who have supported the manual processes that sustained us in the past.

Benefits of the New Tool

Our goal is to leverage this new technology to provide direct benefits to our members and the organization:

- **Member Access:** Once the system is fully configured in the new year, members will be able to securely view their current membership status and review their giving history with **AOSHS**.
- **Strategic Data:** The new tool will provide us with essential information on giving trends and membership trends, allowing the Board to make

data-informed decisions about our programs and outreach.

- **Operational Integration:** This tool will also be crucial for laying the groundwork for next year's website redesign effort. We will share more details on that project in a future issue of *The Q*.

We anticipate having the new tool in place by the time this newsletter reaches you, which means we will have used it to manage this distribution. This enhancement will allow us to accurately track readership of *The Q*, providing a clearer view of member engagement.

I also want to thank our team—**Jaime, Kevin, and Adam**—for their hard work and expertise in overseeing this transition. **AOSHS** is in very good hands as we implement this technological improvement.

We appreciate your patience during this transition and look forward to sharing the benefits of this modern management system with you.



If you are not already a member of the **AOSHS FB group**, you can request to join here:

www.facebook.com/groups/169980156354700/about/

WANTED



AOSHS wants your **CLASSROOM PHOTOGRAPHS** from elementary and middle schools for the Archives. They may be donated or loaned, and they will be scanned and made available for viewing through the AOSHS website. If donated, they will be placed in the Archives. If loaned, they will be returned to you.

AOSHS WANTS YOUR PHOTOS TO PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF DOD SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD!

Please send your photographs to:

AOSHS
704 W Douglas Ave
Wichita, KS 67203

For donations, please include a
Property Donation Form, found at:

aoshs.org/forms/

BRAT Memories

Greg Alderete

I grew up in a system that worshipped order—rank, discipline, ceremony, codes. I knew what a uniform meant before I could tie my shoes. I knew how to say “yes, sir” even when I didn’t mean it. My parents served. The flag flew outside our house. And we moved. A lot.

And through all of it, school was the one place that was supposed to be the same—that’s what they told us.

“Math is math anywhere in the world,” they said.

“History doesn’t change,” they said.

“Education is the great equalizer,” they said.

But I knew early on that school didn’t fit me. Not really.

Not the way it was structured.

I didn’t care about algebra. I wasn’t inspired by war dates or state capitals. I had zero passion for multiple choice.

But I lit up for four things:

Art. Music. Biology. English.

Between Bases and Bell Schedules

We moved every few years, like clockwork. New countries. New schools. New rules. But what I discovered is that even in the most rigid education systems, some classrooms breathed differently.

Art class gave me permission to be curious instead of obedient.

Music taught me to listen—not just to notes, but to silences.

Biology pulled me out of my own head and into the wild world of organisms and systems.

And English—that was my escape hatch. The one subject that gave my thoughts a language, and my feelings a home.

In every school, whether it was in Belgium or North Carolina, those were the four places I could be myself.

Not a rank. Not a test score. Not “dependent of.”

Just me.

The Hidden Curriculum

When you’re a BRAT, you learn to adapt—fast. You learn to read people, pack light, hold your feelings tight, and answer questions like, “Where are you from?” with a shrug and a practiced smile.

BRAT Memories *-continued*

And so much of school felt like another uniform: lessons in conformity, answers you could bubble in. But art and music and English and biology didn't ask me to adapt. They asked me to look inward. To question. To observe. To care.

That mattered.

Because I didn't know how to say it at the time, but I wasn't just learning facts—I was learning how to feel human in a system built for silence and survival.

The Military Made Me Move, But These Subjects Helped Me Stay

They gave me consistency.

A cello sounds like home, whether it's playing in Belgium or Kansas.

A good poem holds up on any continent.

The beauty of mitosis doesn't change with zip codes.

And painting always brought me back to center—even if the walls around me changed every two years.

What I Know Now

I used to think I wasn't good at school. But that wasn't true.

I was good at learning—just not in ways that could be easily graded. I was wired to pay attention to beauty, pattern, connection, and voice.

And while the military trained me to adapt and endure, those four subjects taught me how to understand the world—and myself—in a deeper, more lasting way.

That wasn't failure. That was freedom.

REMEMBER,
WE NEED
YOU
TO HELP
MAKE IT
HAPPEN



A Very Successful Stand to Match Day

The AOSHS Board of Directors

Again this year, AOSHS participated in the **Stand to Match Day donation drive**, which took place on November 11 in **Manhattan, KS**. One half of our **Endowment Fund** is invested in the **Greater Manhattan Community Fund, Armed Forces Community Foundation**, a local fund in **Northeast Kansas** that supports the Military Community of nonprofit organizations in the **Fort Riley** area. Our

membership was generous with their donations, allowing us to reach our maximum match, and indicating a deep affection and appreciation for our AOSHS mission.

We cannot begin to thank you enough for your generous financial support.



Curator's Corner

by Adam Gossman



Legacy: What are we looking for?

As you would imagine, one of the questions I get asked most frequently is: what are you interested in preserving?

Our mission is to preserve the legacy of the **Department of Defense Schools** worldwide. Legacy boils down to much more than mementos or trinkets. As the **Curator of the American Overseas Schools Historical Society** I curate the legacy of those who have had an impact on the Department of Defense schools system.

What is so special about letter jackets, trophies, and plaques?

Sometimes people ask to place a “value” on an item. This is always tricky. A letter jacket from 1976 probably would not rake in so many dollars and cents as other items in an auction.

The value and worth is less in the threads of a jacket than in the memories it keeps. A plaque is a ridiculously boring item to look at until you see that it means something. It means something to someone.

It is the memory that remains.

All that to say, I do get really excited about scrapbooks, pictures, and stories. Legacy goes beyond yearbooks and letter jackets. Legacy is what you see when you close your eyes and think about **Dr. Joseph Blackstead** or **Dr. Georgia Mae Williams-Scaife**. I have never met anyone who did not speak highly of **Dr. Joseph Tafoya**. There are many great leaders and friends that reside in what makes the Legacy of the Department of Defense School System

My job is outstanding. Not only do I get to travel through time, but I also get to remember other people’s memories. In a very real way I feel connected to any of the many people who put together scrapbooks and articles, or written stories.

Ultimately, I am a caretaker of the important things. Those things you cannot take with you, but last forever. The warm principal who made you feel comfortable when you were a new teacher or the teacher who was just so cool you remember them many decades later. This is what I do, and I am honored and proud to do so.

What are we looking for? We are looking for Legacy – for what really matters.

Many blessings to you all!



RECOGNIZING THOSE WHO

DONATE

TO AOSHS

AOSHS wishes to recognize this quarter's donors who support the Museum and Archives and our operating fund. While membership fees are definitely the backbone of our funding, member donations are vital to carrying out and expanding the work of the Society.

The annual recognition program runs from the current **DoDDS Reunion** (Reunion XXXVI in Lexington, KY, July 12, 2024) to the beginning of the DoDDS Reunion the following year (Reunion XXXVII).

Donors within the Support Levels have their names published in the *AOSHS Quarterly* the quarter that their donation was received, or if missed, the following newsletter. Please let us know if we missed including your donation so we can correct that error. **All donors for the year will be recognized for the final time in each Fall issue**, and to all of you who found it in your hearts and pocketbooks to support the AOSHS mission, ***WE THANK YOU!***

DONOR SUPPORT LEVELS

Supporters

Those who donate from \$25 to \$99

Friends

Those who donate from \$100 to \$249

Pacesetters

Those who donate from \$250 to \$499

Sponsors

Those who donate from \$500 to \$999

Patrons

Those who donate from \$1,000 to \$1,999

Benefactors

Those who donate \$2,000 or more

SUPPORTERS

Janet Acker
Lani Allanson-Donoho
Kathleen Brown
Ruth Dengrove
Norma Elgan & Cheryl Wenz
Tom & Nancy Hoff
Diana Kempton
Edward & Heidi La Londe
Paola Meimaris
Susan Pleiss
Janet & Pete Price
James Ross
Patricia Slama
Robert & Becky Ward

FRIENDS

Myrna Berg
Berlin Brats Alumni Assn.
Mary & Anthony Colucci
Beth Cornell
DeVee & Kevin Dietz
Michael & Marilyn Fitzgerald
Ron & Glenna Harrison
Susan Jackson
Derrick & Jacinta Jones
Mary Leonhart
Winanne Murray
Zuzana Plesa
Jennifer Schaal
Gayle Vaughn-Wiles
Julie Wittenberg

PACESETTERS

Nancy Bresell
Patricia Currie
Charles & Larissa Toth
Mary VanDeventer & Steve Lotspeich

SPONSORS

Carol Haines

PATRONS

Timothy & Irene Olnick
Frank & Margaret Roehl

BENEFACTORS

Deborah Johnston

We Thank You!



IN MEMORIAM

Below are the latest notices we have received of those recently deceased. While we are pleased to provide this service to our membership, we realize that we may not know of other colleagues who have passed. You can help us by informing the AOSHS office when you learn of the passing of others. If you would like to purchase a Memorial Virtual Remembrance in honor of one of these or other colleagues, go to aoshs.org/virtual-remembrances/.

In Memory

DICK CAWLEY

November 9, 1936 – June 29, 2025

TOM DEANGEL

_____ – August 29, 2025

CORRINNE ERICKSON-STRAND

August 8, 1931 – November 3, 2025

BARBARA JANE HANEY

February 6, 1942 – November 15, 2025

MIKE HANLEY

_____ – November 13, 2025

KAREN METROGEN

June 12, 1951 – October 28, 2025

KATHY MITCHELL

May 5, 1946 – January 5, 2026

SHERIDAN PEARCE

July 21, 1946 – November 18, 2025

MIKE PRUE

March 10, 1972 – November 20, 2025

ALEX VETO

June 17, 1951 – August 28, 2025

aoshs **DIRECTORY**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2025

Frank Roehl	President	frank@aoshs.org
Jamey Hansen	Vice President	jamey.h@aoshs.org
Ron Harrison	Treasurer	ron@aoshs.org
Julie Wittenberg	Secretary	julie@aoshs.org
Mary VanDeventer	<i>AOSHS Quarterly Publication</i>	mary@aoshs.org
DeVee Dietz	Scholarships/BRAT Rep.	devee@aoshs.org
Mary Leonhart	Historian	mary.l@aoshs.org

STAFF, CONTRACTORS and ASSISTANCE

Jaime Zajac	Office Manager
Adam Gossman	Contracted Curator
Kevin Frutiger	Contracted Digitization / Webmaster
Elizabeth Brace	Photographer
Monica Lange	CISR
Lesley McLeary	CPA/
(with Walter Pikul)	Personnel Accountant

VOLUNTEERS

Gayle Vaughn-Wiles	Past President
Tina Calo	Incoming Obituaries
Richard Nell	Overdue Memberships
Winanne Murray	
& Susan Nordell	Donor Recognitions \$100-\$499
Myrna L. Margraf	Wichita Archive Volunteer
Chrystie Limes	Wichita Volunteer
Monique Margraf	Wichita Digitization Volunteer

FOUNDER EMERITUS

Thomas T. Drysdale, May 4, 1921 – February 28, 2013

The AMERICAN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY (AOSHS)

AOSHS 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, two years for \$45.00, or five years for \$100.00. To join, visit our website at www.aoshs.org/membership/ where you can submit a membership form and payment online or download a membership form to send by mail.

DONATIONS to help preserve the AOSHS Museum and Archives for posterity and historical research are appreciated and are tax deductible as allowed by the IRS. Donations may be sent to **AOSHS, 704 West Douglas Avenue, Wichita, KS 67203.**

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 office@aoshs.org, or by postal mail to: **AOSHS, 704 West Douglas Avenue, Wichita, KS 67203.**

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.

AMERICAN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY ADDRESSES

Office Manager
Website
Memorabilia
Contact the President
Membership
Remembrance Program
Email & Change of Address

AOSHS, 704 West Douglas Ave., Wichita KS 67203-6104
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